



Haksar Memorial Volume I

**Contemplations  
on the  
Human Condition**

P N HAKSAR

***Contemplations on the Human Condition*** and ***Contributions in Remembrance*** are the first two of the series of Haksar Memorial Volumes, planned by the Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development (CRRID) as part of its regular academic programmes. These two publications are volumes of great importance to those discerning readers, who are concerned about India today and tomorrow in the global context. In these two books CRRID has brought together the thoughts of P N Haksar and of some of the finest minds in the country on the problems and potentials of the Indian people and the human condition in the contemporary world.

***Contemplations on the Human Condition*** is a selection of the writings, speeches and personal letters of P N Haksar. Together they represent the quintessence of his profound thoughts and penetrating analysis of the Indian reality and the world around him in a historical perspective. His scientific mind focuses on a wide range of issues with a bearing on the diverse aspects of what he called the 'human condition', seeking a direction for social change. His expressions are incisive, views provocative and rooted in the varied experiences of his life, nurtured in the crucible of his very rigorous mental discipline. Of particular interest are his personal letters to Indira Gandhi on matters of contemporary political concern and a section of his report to the government on Nigeria, when he was the Indian High Commissioner there. All these add up to P N Haksar's vision of the India of his dreams, a new India, truly democratic and secular and at peace with itself both materially and spiritually.

***Contributions in Remembrance*** is in reality a complementary volume to ***Contemplations on the Human Condition***. Its core is the product of three week-long academic programmes of lectures and seminars organized annually by CRRID so far, since 2001, on the occasion of the birth anniversary of P N Haksar. Distinguished scholars of social and material sciences and humanities and administrators, planners and diplomats, committed to an understanding of the contemporary world and its impact on India for both benefit and detriment, have tried to provide a profound analysis of India's achievements, failures and potentials and give a direction to its path of development within today's correlation of international forces. This volume also contains tributes to P N Haksar by some of those who had the privilege of interacting with him. Among these of particular interest are two pieces by Kamal Hossain, former Foreign Minister of Bangladesh and Mueeedul Hasan, a close associate of the late Tajuddin Ahmed, Prime Minister of Bangladesh Government in exile, on P N Haksar's contribution to the liberation struggle of Bangladesh.

The two volumes together open up new vistas of thought on India and the contemporary world.

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**HAKSAR MEMORIAL VOLUME I**

# **Contemplations on the Human Condition**

**Selected writings, speeches and letters**

**P N Haksar**

**Edited by  
Subrata Banerjee**



**Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development,  
2-A Sector 19-A, Madhya Marg, Chandigarh (INDIA)**

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## FOREWORD

It was an honour and pleasure to have known Mr P N Haksar as a friend, philosopher and guide. Writing a "Foreword" for the volumes containing his letters, writings and speeches and those contributed both by his friends and critics is a matter of great privilege for me.

The initiative taken by the Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development, which Mr Haksar nurtured for more than two decades and more, indicates its earnest desire to take up the task left behind by him as the Chairman of its Governing Body.

CRRID bears the definite imprint of Mr Haksar's worldview expressed through a combination of research and study by scholars in a multi-disciplinary academic environment. Mr Haksar always encouraged the contribution of senior scholars from humanities, social sciences, science and technology and other areas of human concern. CRRID, which started with meagre resources, has attained a unique place in the academic life of the country by dint of the hard work of its dedicated team of serious researchers, nurtured by Mr Haksar's vision.

The effort made by CRRID in bringing out these volumes containing Mr Haksar's letters, writings, speeches and contributions of friends and critics, is extremely commendable and it is a treasure for the world of readers both known and unknown to Mr Haksar, who held the dignity of human beings as the highest denominator in judging human conditions.

*Contemplations on the Human Condition* and *Contributions in Remembrances* are two volumes of great importance to those discerning readers, who are concerned about India's present and future in the global context. In these two volumes, CRRID has brought together the thoughts of Mr Haksar

and some of the finest minds in the country on the challenges and potentials of the Indian people and the human conditions in the contemporary world.

These two volumes together open up new vistas of thought on India and the contemporary world and they add up to Mr Haksar's vision of the India of his dreams - truly democratic, secular, resurgent and at peace with itself, materially and spiritually.

I wish CRRID all success on this unique effort.

  
(A R Kidwai)

Governor Haryana



## PREFACE

These two volumes, brought out in the memory of Shri P N Haksar by the Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development (CRRID), are a part of its academic activities carried out since its inception. Volume-I contains his speeches, writings and letters selected by the editor from different sources including his personal collections. Volume-II contains contributions by distinguished scholars, administrators, veteran diplomats, planners and well-known experts from the humanities, social and material sciences, the arts and culture, during the week-long academic programmes annually organized by CRRID since 2001, after Shri Haksar passed away in November 1998. These programmes comprised seminars, conferences and lectures followed by discussions. His friends and critics have enthusiastically responded to the idea of providing wider access to these discussions through a publication.

Shri Haksar had a highly organized mind and his views were reflective of in-depth study of a very wide spectrum of human conditions in a given time and space. He saw the future in the past and the past in the future. He did so by critically examining the historical fallout of the events, which his highly sensitive mind, endowed with love for nature and compassion, had witnessed over the years. He also inherited certain folk wisdom from his ancestors. These found expression in his writings, speeches and highly informative interactive sessions he held on many formal and informal occasions. His simple answers to complex questions were amazing. He highly respected human dignity and held in the highest esteem those in whom he found some virtue.

CRRID was fortunate to have Shri Haksar's guidance as Chairman of its Governing Body and editor of its quarterly journal, *Man & Development*. Above all he was a mentor of and a father figure for the small family of CRRID, which he tried to raise to an Institution of academic excellence. He used historical events to create new geographical boundaries. Similarly, he gave a pleasant turn to difficult events.

These two volumes are the beginning of a modest effort by CRRID, under the self-effacing guidance and contribution of Shri Subrata Banerjee, an old friend and colleague of Shri Haksar's for nearly 40 years.

This, as I said above, is a modest attempt. Possibly it is not fault free. Nevertheless, it owes gratitude to many of those who have contributed to the making of this beginning. Anonymity not being a constraint, it may, therefore, be appropriate to list the initial support given by Professor S K Goyal and his colleagues from ISID, my own colleagues, Professor Gopal Krishan, Ms Suman Khosla, Shri Ashwani Sharma, Shri Kulwinder Singh, Shri Hem Singh and a band of workers from CRRID. The same gratitude is extended to the colleagues from the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, and IIC Library in particular, and those who unhesitatingly made valuable material available by placing their publications and other documents, especially personal letters from Shri Haksar, at the disposal of CRRID. The co-operation of his daughters, Smt. Nandita Haksar and Smt Anamika Haksar, made possible collection of material from individuals, different Institutions and less known sources.

These volumes are unique both in the form and content in view of the widest range of Shri P N Haksar's own writings, speeches and contributions of distinguished authors, depicting the human condition in relation to the future looking into the past and the past looking into the future.

5 August 2004

**Rashpal Malhotra**  
**Founder-Director**  
Centre for Research in Rural  
and Industrial Development

## INTRODUCTION

Editing the writings of Shri P N Haksar and contributions in his memory is, for me a privilege and a challenge at the same time. It is a privilege, because it gives me an opportunity to share once more with him those stimulating moments of his enunciation of his concerns for what he called "the human condition".

He was seven years older than me. Thus, we belonged to the same generation. We shared many experiences in common, witnessed many historic moments and events of practically the whole of the twentieth century. These had moulded our thinking and values and world outlook to a large extent. He looked at every event in its historical context, linking today to yesterday and tomorrow. I believe that this was born of his internalization of Marxian materialist dialectics. This helped him look at life in its totality. Understandably, he did not believe that every word that the classical theoreticians of Marxism had written was a universal truth, immutable and frozen in time. He never, however, disclaimed his debt to Marxism. He was too much of a nationalist, not in the narrow chauvinist sense of the term, to be a communist, given the tendency of his communist friends, as he felt, to feel somewhat uncomfortable in the ranks of nationalists. From Haksar I had learnt to internalize my understanding of Marxism. At the same time I was able to transcend the so-called conflict between communism and nationalism, because of my personal experience in the communist movement. May be, I have said more than I should have in trying to explain why I feel privileged to edit the writings of my friend and mentor, Shri P N Haksar.

The challenge too lies in this relationship of mine with Haksar. I worked with him on editing *Man & Development* for about 15 years. During this period I became saturated with his thoughts, as they found expression in the selection of articles for the journal and his editorials. So much so that he relied practically entirely on me during the last few years when he gradually lost his eyesight. As far as *Man & Development* was concerned, I practically became his *alter ego*. This makes me feel that I may have fallen victim to hagiolatry, letting my heart overrule my mind.

Haksar was usually very meticulous about his writing. I remember for instance of having to read three versions of the first part of his autobiography, *One More Life*, before it went to the press. Each time there were significant changes in expressions or nuances. At the same time he wrote many pieces for journals or newspapers on contemporary events, which were necessarily somewhat ephemeral and yet shot with perceptive observations. I have avoided using such pieces as far as possible. It is quite possible that some have remained. In a collection such as this repetition of ideas and thoughts are probably inescapable. I have tried to avoid it by editing out some portions in at least one of the articles.

Furthermore, I felt that, but for a few exceptions, it would be pointless to publish in the volume, *Contemplations on the Human Condition*, which carries a selection of his writing and his letters, his writings that have already appeared in one or the other of his books *Premonitions* (1979); *Reflections on our Times*; *India's Foreign Policy and its Problems* (1989); and *A Basket of Fallen Leaves*. The years of the publication of two books are not available. Among the exceptions is *The Making of an Indian*. I am sure the reader will realize the importance of this piece in any collection of the writings of P N Haksar. The other exceptions are the editorials from *Man & Development*. The letters selected are naturally all from him, barring one exception. There must have been many more letters that we could not procure. There were many very personal letters, which their recipients were naturally unwilling to publish. Even in the letters that I have selected, especially those written to me, I have as far as possible edited out portions that I thought were too personal for general reader interest. This was a very difficult task. Observations of a person such as P N Haksar express not only his perceptive and stimulating thoughts, but also the personality of the man. This comes out more clearly in some of his letters. He had no hesitation in expressing his fondest feelings for his friends and the sincerest concern for their well-being. I have included in the letters section a very stimulating correspondence between two great minds P N Haksar and U R Rao. Two letters to Indira Gandhi, secured from among his personal papers, are brilliant examples of his



ability for penetrating and in-depth analysis of political developments.

I have not attempted to maintain a chronological order. I have tried to group together the articles, broadly, according to issues. The volume opens with a piece, which is full of his historical perspective. The next 28 articles relate to different aspects of Indian problems. The next 10 pieces are on international affairs. The next four articles are his tributes to some of his close friends. The last few writings cover his philosophy, life and world outlook. I hope some of these reflect the personality of this great intellectual and visionary, who moulded some of the finest hours of India's history. We have tried to indicate the date and source of each speech or article, except in the case of five, from among his personal papers secured from Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. In a few cases we have tried to identify the date from internal evidence. Some of these speeches and writings were uncorrected typescripts, which had to be edited to the minimum extent possible for readability. We shall be very thankful if any reader can help us in identifying dates and also securing correct versions of these speeches and writings so that we can make amends when we hopefully bring out a second edition of this volume.

The volume, *Contributions in Remembrance: A Homage to P N Haksar*, was not so difficult to handle. The first section contains essays written as tributes to P N Haksar and the rest consists of the papers presented at the three series of Haksar Memorial Lectures, organized by CRRID, held so far. Among the tributes I would like to draw particular attention to four pieces. Two are by the former Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, Mr Kamal Hossain and Mr Muyeedul Hasan, a close associate of the late Mr Tajuddin Ahmed, Prime Minister of the Bangladesh Government in exile. These two essays cover P N Haksar's role during the liberation struggle of Bangladesh. If we had only succeeded in persuading some of the Indian Foreign Service Officers, involved with the Bangladesh struggle, to write, we could have got a more complete picture of Haksar's role in those historic days. The third is a piece by Mr Unnikrishnan, the secretary attached to P N Haksar as Chairman of the Indian Statistical Institute. This

was published in *Man & Development*. The fourth contribution is a poem in Hindi by Dr P C Joshi. He felt that it would lose much of its character in translation.

The inadequacies, however, are evident. The tributes section should have had many more contributions. We did try. In many cases we got no reply to our letters. May be, we should have tried harder. This is also true of the lectures. Quite a few spoke, but presented no papers. We sent them transcripts of their speeches, but some of them did not get back. May be, we should have tried harder. May be, it is again hagiolatry on my part to say that quite a few who had received much intellectual food from Haksar, do not now feel the emotional need to be associated with his memory. This is indeed a pity. In the section containing lectures of the Third Haksar Memorial Lecture series, I have included a discussion on the lecture that the President of CRRID Society, Shri Keshab Mahindra, delivered. This is because of my perception of the need to draw attention to an issue of great contemporary importance to India.

In conclusion I must express my deepest sense of gratitude to my young friend, Shri Rashpal Malhotra, Founder Director of CRRID, for entrusting me with this task of editing these two volumes, which are expressions of our homage to Shri P N Haksar, whose contribution to the development of this centre, as the Chairman of its Governing Body till the last day of his life, cannot be measured in words.

I could not have carried out this assignment without the co-operation of Ms Suman Khosla, Editorial Research and Publications Officer of the centre. It was she, who worked in the Nehru Memorial Library and ferreted out some very important letters and writings of P N Haksar and prepared the material for the press. I must also thank Mr Ashwani Sharma and Mr Hem Singh of the computer section and Mr Kulwinder Singh, Research Assistant, for the hard work they put in to assist Ms Khosla in her task. As I chose to exercise remote control, for personal reasons, I must take the blame for any shortcomings and inadequacies that may have remained in the final text.

3 August 2004

**Subrata Banerjee**

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**Writing/Speeches**



## IS HISTORY BUNK?

Henry Ford had defiantly declared that history was “bunk”. Such a statement from a US citizen is understandable. After all, the United States is not overburdened with history. As a distinguished French social scientist, Mme Christianne Hurtig declared to me: “The United States is not a country, it is an idea. And, the idea is how to make money”.

Ford's view of history is widely shared by a large number of educated and knowledgeable persons. They are often heard saying that we can draw no lessons from history. The example of the Bourbons of France is cited. It was said of them that they “learnt nothing and forgot nothing”. Professor Harold J Laski, who was Chairman of the Labour Party in the mid-thirties of this century, was often heard saying in public that his party was like the Bourbons. The great Sir Winston Churchill, with his vast knowledge and experience, wrote that Britain had neither permanent friends nor permanent enemies; Britain had only permanent interests. It would be interesting to know what are Britain's permanent interests in the world of today.

Despite his vast intelligence, Churchill obviously lacked a sense of history and the complex processes involved in it. How else can one explain why he continued to believe, right upto the eve of Indian independence, that the sun will continue to shine as ever over the British Empire. He also failed to understand that Mahatma Gandhi, whom he contemptuously described as the “naked Fakir”, had set into motion a process, which would bring about the destruction of the great imperial domain of Britain of which India was known to be the brightest jewel. To the best of our knowledge and belief, Jawaharlal Nehru stands out as the only person who was uniquely sensitive not only to history, but to the historical processes as well. He sensitized those who read what he wrote, heard what he said, that past, present and future are not unconnected scenes in the drama of human existence on this earth.

What then is history? It is no part of our intention in this article to begin a new chapter in Historiography. Our interest lies mainly in trying to understand how and why certain things happened in the way they did. In trying to comprehend the complexities of the historical processes in our modern times, we draw some sustenance and support from Thucydides.

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*Man & Development* : December 1996.

According to Encyclopaedia Britannica, the great Greek historian was:

...[A]man of the Peloponnesian War. He had grown up in a world divided by the power politics of the Athenian Empire and the Spartan League, which set the immediate quarrel of Athens and Corinth in its political context. He was interested in the factors of *human behaviour* that influenced questions of aggression and security. From the Sophists he had learned to analyze such moral concepts as that of justice in the light of historical evidence; from medical science he took analogies for the play of forces in "the body politic", especially under the "pathological" conditions of war. From the outset, therefore, Thucydides was well fitted by talent and training to analyse the political character of the Peloponnesian War; then, as the terrible events of the war added to his evidence and understanding, he probed ever more deeply into the human passions underlying political action, until he gained final perspective with the fall of Athens. Thus, in 30 years' writing and revision he drew patterns of regularity in the varied interplay of human nature and political circumstance that make history and developed literacy techniques to display events in their true nature and to express in speeches not only the words but the inner motives of policy. Thucydides achieved his aim of composing a history of *permanent value* for serious students of politics.

Drawing inspiration from Thucydides, we are driven to the conclusion that in the making of human history on this earth, "human passions" as well as "permanent values" are somehow involved. The Bourbons apparently did not understand the human passion for 'Liberty, Equality and Fraternity'. We are thus led to construct a hypothesis, the validity of which must naturally be tested against observed and observable historical facts. History would thus be defined as a process of interaction between *people* and the power structure existing at a given time and in a given country with its cultural and civilizational specificities. Such an interaction is mediated through a variety of institutions historically evolved in that country. If, as a result of this interaction the overwhelming mass of people find their passions and values being negated, one can confidently predict that a process of alienation would gather momentum and the power structure would collapse. In our own twentieth century, this is precisely what has happened, beginning with the collapse of the Manchu Empire in 1911, followed by the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Romanov Empire, the Ottoman



Turkish Empire, the British, French, Portuguese, Belgian and the Dutch Empires, as well as the American imperial outpost in the Philippines. Finally, the utter destruction of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics also because it fell a victim to the denial of legitimacy to “human passion” and “permanent values” embedded in words like “Bread and Liberty”.

We have briefly surveyed the arena of history beginning with the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BC) right upto the end of almost the end of the twentieth century with one purpose alone. That purpose is to hold aloft the banner of moral universe as against the all too facile assumptions being made in India that the root of our salvation lies exclusively through some quick fixes in the realm of economics. Even from the point of view of averting ecological disaster, which is looming large on humanity's horizon, we have yet to discover a pattern of development, which, while ensuring food security for all will, at the same time, preserve and strengthen the moral fabric of our society. If there is any lesson to be learnt out of our experience during the 50 years of our independence, India must persevere in combating the paradigm of dominance and subservience within which international trade, finance, technological exchanges, etc., are forced upon us by the so-called developed countries of the world, more especially by the United States of America, which practises unilateralism as an instrument of its diplomacy. Preserving the moral health of body politik and maintaining the ecological balance are conditions precedent to survival and growth not only of India, but of this entire earth. If this is not done in time, we will continue to suffer from the consequences of the unresolved dilemmas of the nuclear age which were articulated by Raymond Aron in his book titled: *Peace and War*. He wrote: “The dilemma of the nuclear age is how to use nuclear weapons diplomatically so that they are not used militarily”.

Although Aron wrote a monumental work, he ended up by finding solace and comfort in the philosophical speculations of Bertrand Russell, with which he ends his book. It may be worthwhile recalling the idea of Russell as quoted by Raymond Aron:

...[we]also know, to return to Bertrand Russell's prophecies, that peace and war among nations are capable of leading to various results. Either humanity will forget what it has learned and will return to the pre-industrial age; or humanity will emerge from a belligerent period following the catastrophes, and all peoples will not survive to know the benefits of the post-belligerent phase; or else humanity will continue for some centuries more the tragic game in the shadow of the apocalypse, hygiene being capable of

filling within several decades the gaps opened in a few minutes by the thermonuclear exchanges; or else, finally — a preferable but not the most probable hypothesis — the nations will gradually surmount their prejudices and their egoism, fanatics will cease to incarnate their dreams of the absolute in political ideologies, and science will give humanity, grown conscious of itself, the possibility of administering the available resources rationally, in relation to the number of the living. The organization will be universal; the communities of culture will be numerous and small. The so-called *Machtstaaten* having completed their mission, will wither away into a pacified humanity. . . .

Leaving aside Bertrand Russell as well as Raymond Aron, neither of whom ever tortured themselves with the processes of history, we might, as we celebrate the fiftieth year of India's independence, recall the words of Jawaharlal Nehru. Delivering his Azad Memorial Lecture on 22 February 1959, Nehru, reflecting on "India Today and Tomorrow" places before his countrymen certain ideas whose values transcend time and space. We quote below a small extract from his speech:

...What I am concerned with is not merely our material progress, but the quality and depth of our people. Gaining power through industrial processes, will they lose themselves in the quest of individual wealth and soft living? That would be a tragedy for that would be a negation of what India has stood for in the past and, I think, in the present time also as exemplified by Gandhi. Power is necessary, but wisdom is essential. It is only power with wisdom that is good.

All of us now talk of and demand rights and privileges, but the teaching of the old *dharma* was about duties and obligations. Rights follow duties discharged.

Can we combine the progress of science and technology with this progress of the mind and spirit also? We cannot be untrue to science, because that represents the basic fact of life today. Still less can we be untrue to those essential principles for which India has stood in the past throughout the ages. Let us then pursue our path to industrial progress with all our strength and vigour and, at the same time, remember that material riches without toleration and compassion and wisdom may well turn to dust and ashes. Let us also remember that "Blessed are the Peace-makers".

The power elite in our country and their intellectual props, as well

as those responsible for moulding the destiny of this country within the framework of democracy, might ponder over the words of Nehru as the year 1996 yields to the year 1997, when we shall be commencing the celebration of the fiftieth year of India's independence beginning with 15 August 1997.

## LINKING PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Respected Janab Hakim Saheb, Excellencies, the distinguished Vice-chancellors of Jawaharlal Nehru University, Jamia Millia University, Hony. Director of the Hamdard Institute of Historical Research, the distinguished participants in the colloquium, ladies and gentlemen.

After the broad survey, which has already been presented to you both in its geographical and historical context by Professor Tirmizi, I am not quite certain what I can usefully add to the presentation already made. As I sat listening to him, my mind, naturally, wandered over time and space. I also put to myself the question, namely, why we have assembled here?

One can look at the past and interpret it in accordance with our concerns of today. These concerns tend to reflect our mindsets. We have an old saying in Hindi:

*Jaa-ki Rahi Bhavna Jaisi*

*Prabhu Moorat Tin Dekhi Taisi*

The same idea was expressed by a Greek philosopher, Xenophanes. He observed, and I am relying upon my memory of what he said, that the Ethiopians think that their gods have black skin and snub noses; the Thracians think that their gods have red hair and blue eyes. Xenophanes went on to reflect that if horses and oxen could draw the images of their gods, they would be like horses and oxen.

We have assembled here to carry on a scholarly debate about the formation of this region. There are theories about how the southern part of the peninsula was attached to what is now called Africa. One can go into the question of the formation of the peoples of this region which the Arabs called Al-Hind — Trans-Indus region. It is a story of how waves upon waves of people came here, settled down, interacted and produced a distinctive pattern of civilization, which, along with the Chinese civilization, shares a distinctive quality of having survived, as Iqbal put it, “the ravages of time without destroying our identity.”

I presume that our interest in the past stems from our concern for our future and not for merely the transient today. Talking about the time past in relation to my own individual life, it is a fact that fairly large part of this century coincides with my as yet unfinished lifespan. I have

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Inaugural address delivered at the “International Colloquim” on the formation of South Asia, in 1992.



completed 78 years. I often ask myself: What is distinctive about the twentieth century in which we live? Cynics have said that history is bunk; others say that like an idiot, it repeats itself. Is then the twentieth century a re-enactment of the earlier centuries? To illustrate my contention that the twentieth century vitally differs from the nineteenth century, I recall a particular date of this century. It was 10 May 1910. It was the day of the funeral of King Emperor Edward of Great Britain. All the crowned heads of the world had assembled there. They were from Japan, China, Russia, Ottoman, Czarist Empire, Austro-Hungarian Empire and of course, all the crowned heads of Europe. In less than 50 years after 1910, the Manchu Empire disappeared; so did the Czarist Empire, the Ottoman Turkish Empire, the French Empire, the Portuguese Empire, the Dutch Empire and the American Imperial domain, of which the Philippines was the outpost. The disintegration of these empires was accompanied by vast upheavals in Asia, Europe, Africa, Latin America and elsewhere too. The century also witnessed for the first time in human history two world wars. I have often said it, but I shall go on saying it, that the twentieth century has been a witness to vast explosion of human consciousness. It is also witness to vaster explosion of human knowledge expressed in terms of advances in basic sciences and in their application. The range and extent of human awareness in our own country, for example, has taken a quantum jump. The first expression of this consciousness is assertion of one's identity expressed in terms of language and culture. And by culture, I mean to include in it all those non-quantifiable parameters of human existence on this planet of Earth, such as human spirit, love, compassion, search for justice and equity, etc. Politics and economics, which fail to recognize the reality of the explosion of human consciousness, result in creating tensions and conflicts. Human beings are increasingly articulating their two basic urges, namely, the hunger of their physical self and the hunger of their spirit. Long long-time ago, an English poet, William Watson, referred, with remarkable insight, to the hunger "of the heart and of the mind." None of us could survive and none of us could have survived if our mother, after we cried on our birth, did not put us up to her bosom for our comfort. Why she should do it? We cannot therefore obviously survive without that non-quantifiable parameter of human existence on this earth called motherhood and mother's love. This itself in turn should lead us to contemplate the condition of one-half of humankind in this century, namely, the women.

What we need today is meeting of our hearts and minds in search of co-operation by overcoming our political divisions. Such divisions are nursed and nurtured by the way politicians, possessing no



larger vision, play their game of politics and bring suffering and grief to the people. For centuries upon centuries, historians have examined the interaction between those who exercise power and those who are subjected to its painful consequences. Until the emergence of democracy, power was legitimized either through birth or through sword and conquest.

It is difficult to talk about human nature, but surveying the vast panorama of human history on this earth, I have tentatively formulated a view that sooner or later, human beings have tended to put an end to a social and political order which they regarded as unjust, iniquitous, authoritarian and lacking moral dimension. Also, it is not an accident that millions upon millions of human beings responded to the message of historical Messiahs like Buddha, Jesus and Prophet Mohammed. All of them passionately advocated love, compassion, tolerance and concern for the meek and the poor. Of course, as it often happens, those in power tend to legitimize their power by getting someone to say that God is on his or her side. History is witness to the fact that Buddha's Sangh the Church of the Jesus and various khalifas, and, of course, the Brahmanical priestly order gave legitimacy to wars and conflicts as well as iniquitous social orders.

The century in which we live and work, namely, the twentieth century, has, if anything, brought confirmation to the fact that while the power elite in all the countries of the world, and more specially in those countries where the democracy does not act as some sort of restraining element, ground realities are in a state of conflict and tension with the power structure. The British historian, Edward Hallet Carr, has stated with deep insight that interaction between factors of continuity and factors of change constitute the very groundwork of history. It is one of the characteristic features of the power elite that they tend to develop a mindset which prevents them from perceiving the ground reality. It has always been the task of sensitive thinking, feeling human beings to articulate both the need for change and the imperatives of that change. That change, howsoever defined, is not the product of any analogies. They are, in effect, the product of human consciousness, taking a variety of shapes and forms determined by historical and cultural specificities of each segment of society involved in the process of change.

As I see it, the history of this twentieth century has been motivated by two ideas: firstly the Idea of liberty, equality and the idea that development must take into account satisfaction of a human being's educational, cultural, spiritual and material needs. I do not see the

governments operating under the flag of SAARC engaging themselves in evolving a design for the future. We, who have assembled here have to put our heads together and conceptualize a new political, economic, social and cultural order in consonance with deeply rooted values of our common heritage and common civilization as well as the ecological imperatives.

If one steps aside for a moment and contemplates on what we call civilization, it is a device invented by one-fourth to keep three-fourths down. Now we have our own conflicts, Indo-Pakistan, Indo-Bangladesh. Politics as it is today is a game of power, but the politicians get away with this game of power. And since it is guaranteed that no true structure, political or economic can survive in this age of massive explosion of human consciousness, massive explosion of human knowledge over both in the area of biology or social or natural sciences, then I think we, who have assembled here can give a message to our politicians to say that the great British Empire could not last nor would petty Presidents and Prime Ministers. We must say to politicians, 'your time is up.' I have myself seen in my own lifetime Presidents, Prime Ministers coming to grief.

Professor Tirmizi in his luminous welcome address has laid bare with remarkable insight the warp and woof of culture and civilization of this part of the world to which all of us who have assembled here today belong. The most distinctive feature of our civilization lies in the explicit acceptance of, what I call pluralism, which have, time and again, been sensitively articulated by our poets, philosophers, sages, saints and sufis.

If people living in our part of the world come together it will not be because of the phenomenon of European unification or in response to the need for regional co-operation. It will come some day as a result of the compulsions of pluralism in our time, of which our civilization is a shining example. Pluralism accepts, respects and yet transcends ethnic specificities, religious specificities, linguistic identity, regional characteristics, etc. If I am not wrong, then, the durability of our civilization, about which Iqbal wrote with a sense of wonder and amazement, can only be understood by the phenomenon of pluralism as a cornerstone of the edifice of our civilization.

I should like to refer briefly to another characteristic feature of our civilization. We never saw the relationship of human beings to nature in any antagonistic form. We never set out to "conquer" Nature. We always yearned to live in harmony with Nature, identifying ourselves with

Nature and its magnificent diversity. If humankind today faces an acute crisis, it is due to that tradition of Western civilization, which, in time, converted knowledge gained through science into material products unrelated to the satisfaction of, what a poet has described as "the hunger of the heart and the famine of the brain". The catastrophic environmental degradation, be it the depletion of the ozone layer, the concentration of carbon dioxide, the salination and desertification of land, the effects of ravaging the forests, etc., are all rooted in the pattern of development which goes by the name of Industrial Revolution within the framework of the so-called market economics continuously fed by stimulating consumerism. It was an English poet, Louis McNiece, who warned his countrymen against 'the excess sugar of a diabetic culture rotting the nerve of life and literature'.

It is my personal conviction, for aught it may be worth, that we in the so-called South Asian region, which is so rich in every sense of the term, should not ape and should start a serious thinking about a new architectural design, within which each one, while retaining its respective identity, will transcend it through a feeling for co-operation for creating a Good Society freeing it from the existing labels called "Capitalism" or "Communism". Only through such a society can we hope to save this Earth from impending devastation and destruction and thus save ourselves from extinction.

I must conclude by reminding ourselves once again that if we do not sensitize ourselves to human aspirations and human needs as articulated in this twentieth century of ours, we shall come to grief. We witnessed the upheavals of the two world wars and the revolutions in Russia, in China and in India. We also witnessed great stirrings in Latin America and Africa and we have also witnessed the total disintegration of what was once the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. All these great upheavals, turbulence and turmoils of this century are rooted in the fact that human beings everywhere simply refuse to be objects of history, but insist on being at the very centre of history and its sole subject. All kinds of mythologies are being created to explain what has happened in our own lifetime in this century. As I see it, everything that has happened upto date is directly related to human beings passionately resisting the assault on their identities and demanding liberty. Finally, this century has generated a veritable explosion in our knowledge and opened up vast possibilities of applying that knowledge in such a manner as to abolish the human mind's spiritual and physical hunger within the limits of a Good Society, which does not contain the cancer of heartless consumerism.



I devoutly hope and pray that this get-together in New Delhi is a beginning of a process of involvement of larger and larger numbers of sensitive human beings belonging to our part of the world dedicated to the task of our renewal, reconstruction and renaissance, inspired by the undying, but as yet unexplored genius of our civilization. As some poet said:

*Kamale Buzdili hai Pasta hona Apne Akhon main;  
Vagarna Kaun karta hai jo Darya Bun nahi sakta.*

I can now only end up by evoking Iqbal Bano's challenging words when she says: "Hum Dekhenge".

I devoutly hope and pray that Iqbal Bano's words — Hum Dekhenge — will not be treated as an invitation to be mere spectators. The pace of change in the world of today is so fast that humanity as a whole and, certainly the vast living, pulsating humanity of our part of the world have to come to grips with the problems of real life and living of billions of human beings. As I have said earlier, that part of earth on which we live and on which our ancestors had woven the fabric of our civilization, is richly endowed. There is human talent in science, in technology, in craftsmanship, in our capacities to learn and to absorb new technologies and to probe all the frontier areas of science.

I had briefly mentioned the idea of creating a new architectural design of a Good Society. In that society, all human beings in our part of the world should have nutritious food; they should have good health, and given a sound body and mind, they should have the best of education, which is impregnated with cultural values. Also, we should have energy drawn from both renewable as well as non-renewable sources. If my memory does not fail me, it was John Stuart Mill, who said something to the effect that if human beings have food to eat and are educated and can acquire skills, they can build any pattern of civilization. If this be so, and I believe it is so, then, it should be within the realm of possibility for scientists and technologists in our part of the world to work together in the following critical areas;

- Food and agriculture
- Health
- Informatics relating to dissemination and propagation of education and culture; and
- Energy.

Unless we do so and share together the results of our joint

research, we shall forever continue to be dependent. To me, such working together of our scientists and engineers unfolds an exciting prospect of moulding the destiny of our people so that we can fulfill in small measure the expectations, which have brought us together in this International Colloquium. We simply must hang together. The alternative is to be hung separately.



## SOME REFLECTIONS ON AUGUST 15

I must begin with a confession. I am, perhaps, old-fashioned. For, I believe that there exists a moral universe, side by side with the physical universe.

While the origin of the physical universe is a subject matter of investigation and debates among the scientists and, of course, among the protagonists of established religions, the moral universe has its origin in the constant tussle between the contradictory nature of motivations of human beings. It expresses itself as a tussle between reason and unreason; between selfishness and altruism; between intolerance and tolerance; between competition and co-operation; and between love and hate.

These contradictory impulses might have their origin in the genetic nature of the human species; or, in the thousands of years of experience of social living. But human nature has within it these dichotomies. I cannot recall who said it but it was well said that the difference between a saint and sinner was not that a saint never had sinful ideas but rather that while having them he recognized them and put a curb on them.

The gradual evolution of the moral universe finds expression in a series of ever closer approximations of social systems, value systems, cultural systems, economic and political systems, to the imperatives of reason, altruism, tolerance, co-operation and perhaps, love. In any kind of social, political, economic system, if the balance between the negative and positive elements in human nature expressed in social terms had not been tilted in favour of reason, altruism, tolerance and co-operation, human beings could not have possibly survived. That is why some of the most perceptive minds who have appeared on the scene of history, sometimes in the garb of messengers of God, have prescribed the imperatives of the moral universe as a condition precedent to the satisfaction of humanity's material and spiritual needs. And they sanctioned the moral code in the name of God; they prescribed punishments and rewards by concepts of Heaven, Hell, the Judgement Day and by the assurance that when *Dharma* declines and wickedness prevails, there would be a new incarnation of God to re-establish *Dharma*, to punish the wicked and to protect the kindly and the decent.

If one examines the evolution of the moral universe, one discovers the causal connection between the concepts of right and

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*Mainstream*, 15 August 1981.

wrong, on one hand, and the need for social solidarity on the other. Societies, which divided human beings between masters and slaves, between noblemen and clergymen and serfs had to yield to social structures based on wider solidarity. Liberty, equality and fraternity summoned up solidarity.

I have another set of beliefs. I believe in the existence of systems as an objective reality. These systems have also grown in the course of their evolution in response to the moral universe and for reinforcing social solidarity. Thus, over a period of time, human beings have evolved a system called family, a tribe, a State, economic systems, and so on. A system has inherent in it certain laws governing it and consolidating it, or contradicting it. Without understanding the logic of a system, one cannot make it serve its purpose. In terms of our own ancient concepts, a system is governed by its own *Dharma*. Assuming the validity of division of society in *Varnas*, the *Varnashram Dharma* has logic. Once that logic is destroyed by new social and economic facts, one has to replace it by another system. Similar kind of considerations apply to other systems like bureaucracy, local self-government, Panchayati Raj, Planning System, etc.

Assuming that the universe is an act of creation, is it not remarkable that the powerful Creator binds Himself down to the laws, which He imposed on His own Creation? He does not use His power to subvert the system. Thus the earth goes round the sun. He does not, in His desire to show His power, order that, once in a while, the sun should go round the earth.

I believe that the essential condition for the survival of any system — political, economic, social, etc. — is its legitimacy. And legitimacy, in its turn, is a derived function of the state of the moral universe at a given time and place in the process of evolution of the human society.

Finally, I believe that human beings having attained knowledge of their social and natural environment, change has increasingly become a conscious process. It has become what might be called a secular process. It is not susceptible to prayer and supplication.

When I look deeply into the segment of time of nearly seven decades of my own existence, I am amazed at the changes, which have taken place. I am a witness to the final destruction of the Ottoman Turkish Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Czarist Empire, the British Empire, the French Empire, the Dutch Empire and the Portuguese Empire. I have also been a witness to convulsions of societies, as for example, the events in Iraq in 1958, or in Iran in 1978. I am also a witness

to the vast upheavals which history has recorded as the Russian and Chinese revolutions, not to speak of the revolutions in Vietnam and Cuba. Contemplating this scene, I have been driven to the conclusion that whatever might be the material strength embodied in a system in terms of production of goods, technology, per capita income, growth rates, etc., no system can survive if it loses its legitimacy in the eyes of the citizens who are governed by that system. I also observe that the distinctive feature of our historical times is the acceleration of the rate of technological and social changes. This could be best illustrated by a rather dramatic survey of human experience contained in a NASA report titled: *Assessing Technology Transfer*. I quote below the relevant paragraph:

Eight hundred life spans can bridge more than 50,000 years. But of these 800 people, 650 spent their lives in caves or worse; only the last 70 had any truly *effective* means of communicating with one another; only the last six ever saw a printed word or had any real means of measuring heat or cold; only the last four could measure time with any precision; only the last two used an electric motor; and the vast majority of the items that make up our material world were developed within the lifespan of the eight-hundredth person.

If there is any validity in what I have stated in the preceding paragraphs, several conclusions suggest themselves if we are to fashion the destiny of our own country which, in effect, means the destiny of nearly 700 millions of *human beings*. However, the central problem lies in the decision to take a new turn inspired by the imperatives dictated by the moral universe and motivated by a conscious attempt to enlarge national solidarity. Without such an act of conversion, no problem of our country can be solved.

The search for economic solutions is pathetic. There are no uniquely economic solutions to our problems. Nor, indeed, are there such solutions to the global economic problems. Given the gathering together of millions of our people is a greater guarantee of our security, sovereignty and national independence than only arms and armaments. No army can fight with limp hands and soft rear. The central problem of mobilization of our national resources, if expressed in purely economic terms, can produce disasters. But in an environment of resurgence of national spirit, one would have the moral basis and the political will for mobilization of our vast resources.

It may be argued that I am suggesting something, which is manifestly absurd in the eyes of the protagonists of *Real Politik* and of the

so-called *pragmatists*. I should like to say that history records durable victories for those who have been inspired by the vision of tolerance, reconciliation, enlargement of the area of social solidarity and not for the faint hearts who take shelter behind so-called realism which is nothing but a rationalization of cowardice and loss of understanding of the deeper laws which move humanity forward.



## THE MAKING OF AN INDIAN

In the citation, which the Vice-chancellor has just read out, some flattering things have been said about me. I was rather pleased hearing it all. At the same time doubts began assailing me. I asked myself: What led the University of Kashmir to honour me? Was it because by accident of birth I am classified as a Kashmiri Pandit? But there are many such Pandits. And there are quite a few who are, if anything, more distinguished than I am. So, being a Kashmiri Pandit could not be the real reason. Nor indeed could I fall back on my achievements, which are merely by-products of trying to earn an honest living. Not being satisfied, I have been searching for an answer.

My mind began wandering through the corridors of time reviewing the time lived and the time spent. I thought of the year 1947. In that year, I got involved, by sheer accident, with Kashmir. The involvement deepened. I was included in our delegation to the Security Council. And so I arrived in New York in January 1948. It was bitterly cold. The only memorable thing, which happened to me in the long wintry months spent at Lake Success was the meeting with the Sher-i-Kashmir — my very first.

The word secularism was an abstraction. It was something in the realm of the desirable. Partition had made me spiritually sick and had eroded my faith in secularism. And when January 30 came in New York, dreams so tenderly kept alive turned into a nightmare. But for the voices of Jawaharlal Nehru and of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah one would have never had the vision restored. Thus at Lake Success, Kashmir became a symbol of hope and faith instead of being a Question inscribed on the agenda of the Security Council. All this is old history. I could not persuade myself to believe that the University had dug it all up and decided to honour me for whatever part I might have played. It was, in any case, a minor part. I was a junior functionary.

I would have gone on ruminating but an idea crossed my mind that the authorities of the University, probably, have affection for the prodigal sons of this Valley. And I am certainly one. But then I must truthfully say that this prodigal son of Kashmir has changed in the course of his wanderings through life. He has become, as Iqbal would have said, a Hindi. And with Iqbal he often sings — *Hindi Hain Ham Watan Hai Hindustan Hamara*. This might be regarded as an act of treachery on my

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Text of convocation address at Kashmir University, from *A Basketful of Fallen Leaves* by Shri P N Haksar.



part, made more heinous coming as it does so soon after being honoured with the Doctorate of Laws *Honoris Causa*. But I owe it to my new *Alma Mater* to speak the truth. As I stand here speaking to you, moved by a deep sense of gratitude, I do so as a Hindi or, if you like, as an Indian. And I do not feel any conflict within myself. Should I explain? Perhaps I should.

Sometime in the early part of the nineteenth century, the ancestor of mine of whom I am the direct descendant bade farewell to the valley. Why he left, I do not know. But he left. It is laconically recorded in Mattan that Sita Ram — that was the name of my ancestor, "*Hindustan Gaya*". Since that fateful day, he, his children, and grandchildren, and great grandchildren and those born thereafter have been wandering over Hindustan in search of an honourable living. They had no assets except those, which their genes gave them.

After leaving the fair Valley, Sita Ram's first home was Delhi. And from there my ancestors wandered to Indore; some went to Gwalior and some to the old Central Provinces. And from my mother's side, they settled in Punjab. One of them — Raja Dinanath, earned fame and fortune as Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Finance Minister. All this would explain why I was born in Gujranwala and brought up in Central Province. However, it was in Uttar Pradesh that I was mostly educated.

In the course of their search for a living in the wide expanses of the plains of India, Sita Ram and his descendants had to adapt themselves to their new environment. Instinctively, they followed Darwin's law of evolution. They adopted new languages, new clothes, new food habits, new codes of conduct and new ethics of work. They became Kashmiris of the plains, forgetting even their language but acquiring new ones with meticulous care. It was Urdu and Persian and then English. And yet they clung to their identity as émigrés do. There was nothing larger to identify oneself with. However, things began changing and by the time I became conscious of the world around me, the First World War had just ended.

I grew up in the midst of a vast turbulence. Gandhi had appeared on our horizon. And he grew larger every day, until he covered the entire sky. Simultaneously, Jawaharlal Nehru appeared as a luminous star. Our minds opened up. And our hearts too. Our vision got enlarged. India began taking shape. I came out of the cocoon. Took wings and fluttered in the fresh winds which were blowing about me. I began wandering over the surface of Hindustan.

I stood at our land's end; I saw waves upon waves of the Indian Ocean eagerly rushing to meet the Arabian Sea. I canoed over the

transparent back waters of Kerala between Kottayam and Alleppey and smelt the fragrance of cardamom and pepper; I saw the graceful areca nut and coconut palms swaying in the gales; I saw the lush green coffee, tea and rubber plantations. And then wandering from Thekaddy to Coimbatore, thence to Mysore and Mercara, contemplating the beauty of the Nilgiris I became possessive about the southern part of our country as I was of its Northern, Eastern, Western and Central. India thus became a reality and not an abstraction.

On this mother earth of India, our ancestors had laboured and created a fabric of civilization weaving together its various threads. The monuments alone which they built and carved and chiselled kept me enthralled. The temple at Martand, the mosques, the forts, the city at Fatehpur Sikri, the caves and frescoes at Ajanta, the temples in Konarak, Khujuraho and Madurai, the Taj at Agra, the ruins of Hampi — all showed the creativity of our forefathers. And I feel possessive about them as I feel about the entire land so laden with gifts of Nature.

I respond to the songs and dances, the music and the folk rhythms of our country. I am moved by Tagore as by Iqbal; I am moved reading Kural and Vallathol, even in their translation. The chanting of Vedic hymns and of Zend Avesta stirs my soul as does the haunting call of a muezzin's *azan* at dawn.

Thus the descendant of Sita Ram returned to the land of his forefathers transformed. I first set eyes on this Valley in 1968. And I came here to attend a meeting of the National Integration Council. And though I could, even with my closed eyes, see Kanyakumari from Dachigam and feel the restlessness of the waves of the Indian Ocean pining to meet the waves of the Arabian Sea, the mountains of the Valley blocked the view for many. And I said to myself: Oh! So much remains to be done. And it remains to be done all over this land of ours. So many still see reality distorted by caste and creed, region and language.

I see that I have been far too preoccupied with myself. I forgot that this is a solemn occasion. I forgot that I have to deliver a convocation address. By custom, convocation addresses in our country must groan under the weight of good advice. But I do not know what advice to give. I am not even certain if good advice helps. We all have to learn from life. And I do not know, if your university and your teachers have equipped you mentally and morally to cope with life and its problems. You might ask: Why I should entertain any doubts on this score? I should not, really. It is a fine university. Your teachers have apparently a sense of calling. You have an experienced Vice-chancellor and a distinguished Chancellor. But then I cannot help observing, as I look at you, that as you

came up to receive your degrees and as you are now sealed, your backs are turned towards the majestic ranges of the mountains which I see from where I stand. Should not you be facing them? Perhaps, the idea was that you would start facing them as you go out after your graduation. That of course you will do. But the question is: How?

Would you have the curiosity to explore not only the foothills of the mountains but also its peaks? Would you be satisfied only by exploring the ranges, or would you be led to explore what lies beyond? Would you be looking at life with unending curiosity or would you be happy being a caged bird — secure and fed by others? Would you be striving for something beyond your immediate reach or would your major obsession be with yourself? I have asked so many questions. Life too will pose these questions. On the answers you give would depend whether you prefer the life of a bird in a cage or fly and flutter in open skies and face its hazards.

Man's humanity, his courage, his knowledge, his wisdom and his yearning to reach out for something larger than himself are abiding sources of mankind's strength and of hope. I said, larger than oneself. The continuing strength of religions is that each postulates a God. And God is larger than oneself. Religion goads man on to attain something larger than himself, surrender to it or to merge with it. But supposing one's God is called Bharat or India or Hind or Hindustan. Then what happens? A new religion will be born — a secular religion devoted to service of fellow men. That religion and God would not contradict each other. That religion will not make one lay an assassin's hand on a fellow human being but to have love and compassion and a striving to create a society permeated by humanity. Only a society so structured and motivated will overcome the baser instincts of human beings — brutality greed and selfishness.

How do we reach the new society? Obviously, we must understand the reality we wish to change. We should know our country. And we should know the world around us. Knowledge is a powerful instrument of change. And knowledge comes from unceasing questioning. It does not come by accepting the conventional wisdom of our forefathers. At one time, the conventional wisdom told us that the earth was flat, that the sun went round the earth, that earthquakes, sorrows and sufferings were caused by God's wrath, that mankind was created, and so on. We know now that all these beliefs were wrong. However, the beliefs which persist about our society are more difficult to cope with. For, in the realm of social sciences proof is difficult; so is experimentation. And yet social evolution is as much a fact as evolution of Nature. Both have a history.



Our country too has been evolving. We do not have dynasties any more though images of the dynastic era persist. We have democracy. This is ensured by the consciousness of our people of their rights. But, as Iqbal said:

*Jamhooriyat Hai Ek Tarze Hukoomut*

*Jis Men Bundon Ko Gina Karte Hain*

*Tola Nahin Karte*

(Democracy is a kind of polity in which men are counted but not weighed)

Now counting is necessary. For all men are equal. And so far we have certainly learnt to count. The day, however, we learn collectively to weigh, we shall have made a qualitative advance. But weigh against what? Against what values? That is a difficult question.

We must learn to weigh every person as a fellow human being, whether he lives in Kashmir or Kerala, in Nagaland or in Gujarat. When we have achieved that, we shall come into our own. But to generate that consciousness we must create a social, economic and political order inspired by equality and motivated by co-operation. Co-operate or Perish — that is the message of our contemporary times both for India and the world.

It is now late in the evening. Soon night will fall on this beautiful and majestic valley. But there will be the dawn. And you will wake up with parchments in your hand. And I too will carry the additional responsibility of being Doctor of Laws. Shall we then together begin a new life? And begin it by singing together Iqbal's immortal song:

*Mazahab Nahin Sikhata*

*Apas Men Beyr Rakhna*

*Hindi Hain Ham Watan Hai*

*Hindustan Hamara*

Thus fortified we shall face the challenge of our times which is much harder than overcoming the mountain ranges and the peaks with which we are surrounded.

## JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

I must have seen Jawaharlal Nehru for the first time for barely a few seconds, but the picture I have of him and of the day when I saw him is still so sharp that I can see every detail, despite the 43 years which separate the event and its recollection.

I see people of Allahabad streaming through its lanes, streets and mohallas; the streams converging and mingling to produce a surging humanity inundating every bit of land between the Ashram of Bharadwaj and beyond. I see the red brick wall of Anand Bhawan with a bit of history written on it in tar: NO WELCOME TO PRINCE. I can still feel the feverish warmth of a February afternoon and the tenseness of long waiting; waiting for the dead body of Pandit Motilal Nehru to arrive.

I was little over 17 then and was living in the hostel attached to the Government Intermediate College. The hostel faced the Malacca Jail. Its gates opened and closed like the jaws of some primordial beast, devouring a vast number of people. That was in 1930. This experience linked itself to an earlier experience in 1920. We were in Nagpur. The house we lived in overlooked Dhantoli Park. In that park the Indian National Congress held its session that year. My grandfather's brother, who stayed with us, attended the session. He was a Home Rule Leaguer. There were other visitors. The conversation was always full of references to Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, C R Das and Jawaharlal. A year passed. One day in 1921 my father returned home from court without his cap. It was apparently consigned to fire, because it was *videshi* — a rather perverse ritual when seen in the light of our contemporary values.

And so I mingled with the crowd on 6 February 1931, rather more in response to a growing identification with the spirit of nationalism than to satisfy a curiosity or to participate in a funeral to assert adulthood.

As the afternoon shadows lengthened, the funeral cortege arrived. Suddenly, I caught a glimpse of a face and of a hand resting on a body draped in tricolour. That is how I saw Jawaharlal Nehru — a mixture of myth and legend. But that face and that hand got engraved in my memory even though I saw him from a distance and through haze of dust of million feet.

The second occasion when I saw Nehru was a few weeks later. And I saw him then on a large scale as if in a close-up shot and for a longer duration. He was wearing a *dhoti*, a *kurta* and the jacket. He had a

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*Mainstream*, November 1973.



cap on. His hands were tied in a clasp behind his back. He was looking down, slightly bent forward and listening intently to a group of five or six young men. They were all from the university. I was passing by Thornhill Road and I stopped to look. I knew none of them and none knew me. Apparently, this little group and Jawaharlal had just returned from Alfred Park where they had gone to see the tree, which by then had become a shrine. It was the tree behind which Chandrasekhar Azad had taken position to give battle to Nott-Bower and his police force. I cannot recollect what Nehru and these young men said. The only remembrance I have is of three faces. Nehru's of course, and of two other. However, it was Nehru's face which arrested my gaze and I kept on looking at it, as one might look for hours at the changing shapes of clouds after a monsoon shower. For the first time in my life I became aware of the importance of a person's face.

The vast majority of us have no faces to show. We wear masks. But Jawaharlal Nehru wore no mask. His face reflected every passing mood, feeling and emotion. Reading again through his autobiography I discovered the reason why his face was so sensitive. Contemplating the faces of Buddhist *bhikkus* Nehru reflects on the dilemma posed by his inner life and its outward manifestation. He observes:

The dominant expression of almost all of them (*bhikkus*) was one of peace and calm, a strange detachment from the cares of the world. They did not have intellectual faces, as a rule, and there was no trace of the fierce conflicts of the mind on their countenances. Life seemed to be for them a smooth flowing river moving slowly to the great ocean. I looked at them with some envy, with just a faint yearning for a heaven, but I knew well enough that my lot was a different one, cast in storms and tempests. There was to be no haven for me, for the tempests within me were as stormy as those outside. And if perchance I found myself in a safe harbour, protected from the fury of the winds, would I be contented or happy there?

"The tempest within" was in all of us in varying intensity. Nehru articulated them. Others who came to Allahabad during the years I was at the university, or later to London, were confident men wearing masks untroubled by any questions. No wonder they evoked so little response. Gandhi of course touched our hearts deeply but left our minds in turmoil of unanswered questions.

Nehru defined the meaning and content of nationalism saving it from introversion. He gave direction and purpose to the struggle for freedom. He gave a vision of India after freedom. Above all, he

discovered India for us so that we could feel that whichever part of it we may come from, the whole of it was ours. By putting our own history as part of man's unceasing quest, Nehru rescued us to scale narrow domestic walls. One had exhilarating experience of being able to feel and to say that Qutub Minar, Taj Mahal and Fatehpur Sikri were part of my own heritage as Khajuraho, Konark, Belur, Halebid, Ajanta or Ellora.

Secularism thus became not a mere slogan, a line in our Constitution or a ritual of embracing each other to be performed on Id, Holi and Diwali, but a value system and a way of life. That way of life and value system are in a state of siege. To lift that siege Jawaharlal Nehru continues to have contemporary relevance. To reduce him to an *ikon* to be brought out on November 14 and to be put back in Teen Murti, is worse than crucifixion.

If secularism is in a state of siege, rationality is being beleaguered by hell-dogs of greed and selfishness. To say all this is not an invitation to despair. But we must recall Nehru's own assertion of faith. Our world has neither lost joy, "nor love, nor light, nor help for pain" and, as Nehru wrote, that "history teaches us of growth and progress and of the possibility of an infinite advance of man".

But then "thought, in order to justify itself, must lead to action".

## STRAY THOUGHTS FOR NOVEMBER 14

I was re-reading the Spanish, classic, *Don Quixote*, by Miguel de Cervantes. A passage in its prologue struck me as odd. Cervantes says:

Let us now come to references to authors, which other books contain and yours lacks. The remedy for this is very simple; for you have nothing else to do but look for a book, which quotes them all from A to Z, as you say. Then you put this same alphabet into yours.... And if it serves no other purpose, at least that long catalogue of authors will be useful to lend authority to your book at the outset.

How very extraordinary that the sixteenth century Spain should have so much in common with the twentieth century India!! No proposition in our country is established by the inner consistency and the strength of an argument backed by verifiable facts and sustained by the logic of causal connections. Authority is all important. Quotation as a mode of proof is conclusive. I wonder how many of our teachers actively discourage their students from quoting authority and insist, on the pain of a penalty, that they write what they know and can reason out.

The tradition of venerating authority and encumbering the thinking process by quotations is full of evil consequences. It easily degenerates into a search for *Gurus*, *Imams* and *Fatwas*, Popes, Evangelists and Fuhrers. That is why it is so disconcerting to see that even in a movement which has its origins in the age of science and prides itself to be the carrier of scientific humanism, legitimacy is established by quoting Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao and even Lin Piao. That is why too, ours is the only country where the “why” and “what” of our internal evolution becomes a derived function of the international configuration and thus, the validity of our domestic policies is tested on the touchstone of the outward garb of our foreign policy. Thus Pol-Potism is not a uniquely Kampuchean phenomenon any more than Fuhrerism was uniquely German. In all times and in all climes when reason becomes subversive, authority takes its place and quoting scripture snuffs out questioning, thinking and reasoning.

What provoked such thoughts for November 14? Was not it the day when Jawaharlal Nehru began his life during which he came to several conclusions as part of his own mental and spiritual development? One such conclusion is worth recalling:

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*Mainstream*, 15 November 1980.

The applications of science are inevitable and unavoidable for all countries and peoples today. But something more than its application is necessary. It is the scientific approach, the adventurous and yet critical temper of science, the search for the truth and new knowledge, the refusal to accept anything without testing and trial, the capacity to change previous conclusions in the face of new evidence, the reliance on observed fact and not on preconceived theory, the hard discipline of the mind — all this is necessary, not merely for the application of science but for life itself and the solution of many of its problems.

Was not Jawaharlal Nehru seriously mistaken in his understanding of India? Obviously, he was. Is not India an exception to every rule? Whereas vast areas extending westward from Vladivostok to San Francisco and thence to Tokyo, Peking and Canton are plunged in using science and scientific temper to solve the problems of life, we in India are defiantly opposed to laws of gravity, of conservation of energy, of costs and benefits and of systems. We are a spiritual country and we have a unique science embodied in *Tantrism*. And we are about to set up a consortium not of computer specialists, systems analysts, operation researchers, management specialists but of Rajneesh, Mahesh Yogi, Satya Sai Baba, Chandra Swami and others *ejusdem generis* which, once it gets going, will make Bihar as prosperous as Punjab, make our economy boom, abolish poverty, generate power at 80 per cent of the installed capacity, make us self-reliant and achieve for us zero-net aid as well as that magical figure of five per cent growth rate for our GNP without any resource mobilization. Coal problem in our Dhanbad area will be resolved by converting Suraj Deva Singh to the spiritual values of the consortium.

If Jawaharlal Nehru had been alive he would have, as he was accustomed to do, expressed surprise. It is just as well that he is not. Too much surprise is not good for one's heart, especially when it has been attacked once.

Jawaharlal was, after all, a "Wog" and we are now true Indians, true to our spiritual moorings. Science is not necessary for solving life's problems. Stargazing can. Lord Venkateshwara can. Science is *mithya*; Science is *Maya*. There is no evolution. There is no DNA molecule. There are no atoms and electrons and protons. There is only *Swayambhu* and *Nara* and *Brahma* and of course, the egg. Why should we then waste money in continuing all the vast network of scientific establishments? Even for sending something up in the air we should rely on our capacity for levitation.



Nehru had many other false notions directly attributable to his being a “Wog”. For instance, he believed in equality. How sad! He did not apparently study *Manusmriti*. If he had, he would have understood that one half of our people consisting of women are divinely ordained to remain under perpetual subjection. Just listen :

बल्येत पितुर्वशे तिष्ठेत्पाणिग्रहस्य योवने ।

पुत्राणां भर्तरि प्रेते न भजेत्स्त्री स्वतन्त्रताम्॥

*In childhood a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband, when her lord is dead, to her sons, a woman must never be independent.*

*Manusmriti* is unrelenting in its purpose, It goes on to prescribe:

विशीलः कामवृत्तो वा गुणैर्वा परिवर्जितः ।

उपचर्यः स्त्रिया साध्व्या सततं देववत्पतिः ॥

*Though destitute of virtue, or seeking pleasure (elsewhere), or devoid of good qualities (yet) a husband must be constantly worshipped as a god by a faithful wife.*

It may be argued that *Manusmriti* has been superseded by secular laws. Why then flog a dead horse? But as recently as 1975, a Committee on Status of Women reported as follows :

Our review indicates that society has failed to frame new norms and institutions to enable women to fulfil the multiple roles expected of them in India today. The majority do not enjoy the rights and the opportunities guaranteed by the Constitution. Increasing dowry and other phenomena, which lower woman's status further, indicate a regression from the norms developed during the freedom movement. The content analysis of periodicals in regional languages revealed that concern for women and their problems has suffered a decline in the past two decades. The new social laws have remained unknown to the large mass of women.

So, the more it changes, the more it is the same in our country. Even this might be bearable. The actual situation is that the more we attempt to abolish poverty, inequality, superstition and obscurantism the worse we become. This state of affairs produces an inner glow in all of us. India resists change. India is eternal. There is something mystical about us. The distraught western world is coming to us for its spiritual salvation. We are in business.

This picture of eternal India is sought to be disfigured by putting into it some imported images of “Secularism” and “Scientific Temper”.

These are of course English words which have failed to get acclimatized — like *vataanukula*. And so we have translated “secularism” into *dharma nirpekshata*. It has another variant called *sarva dharma sammaan*. Since the words “secular” and “secularism” are English words, the translators should have, at least, tried at first to understand their meaning. And if they had consulted Oxford Dictionary, they would have found “secular” to mean something “belonging to the world and its affairs as distinct from church and clergy; non-ecclesiastical, non-religious, or non-sacred”. And “secularism” means “the doctrine that morality should be based solely in regard to the well-being of mankind in the present life to the exclusion of all considerations drawn from belief in God or in a future state”.

All these years we have smugly assumed that we are secular and are promoting secularism if we embrace each other on Holi, Diwali or Id and do not kill each other after shouting *Har Har Mahadeva* or *Allah O Akbar*. And even this we have not been able to achieve. The words “secular”, “secularism”, “secularization” embody a long-drawn-out struggle, against the Church's attempt to arrogate to itself the capacity to answer all questions in theological terms. Gradually, painfully and often with hard struggle, success came in wresting out of the clutches of the clergy, increasing areas of human endeavour which then became subject matter of non-religious experience. Thus Economics, Politics, Science, Technology got secularized. There is a necessary inter-connection between secularism and scientific temper. Both are animated by questioning, by a spirit of enquiry, by deductive and inductive logic, and are always subject to the discipline of facts.

Perhaps, Jawaharlal Nehru had not the time to consider the implications of his advocacy of secularism and scientific temper to our educational system, to our media policies and programmes and to our political culture. That is why, perhaps, he kept reminding himself that he had still miles to go.

And so the little oasis he created of some fresh ideas relevant to our future has been smothered by the desert land. That is why we are witnessing to our utter shame and sense of degradation the enactment of a parody of Rabindranath Tagore's dream that his country would some day awake into that heaven of freedom “where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit”.

Obviously, neither Tagore nor Nehru knew eternal Indian really. They were fools and dreamers. And we fell for them. Should one persist in the Original Sin? That is a gnawing question.

## I

The title of this article might suggest an attempt at an astrological forecast which, of course, it is not. For, astrologers have yet to establish a causal connection between the movement of the celestial bodies and evolution of the human species or growth and decay of human societies. There is as yet, for instance, no astrological interpretation of the fall of the Roman Empire as against, for example, Gibbon's. Coming to our contemporary world, one is still awaiting an astrological account of the rise of Japan as a super-industrial power.

If the article is not an astrological forecast, it is neither an attempt at a political forecast. To predict with precision the shape our country is likely to take during the decade, which began in 1969, is both hazardous and foolhardy.

Our political, economic and social evolution depends on many factors: consistency of our commitment to our country; our collective wisdom or folly; our perception of linkage between the immediate and the ultimate; the extent to which we can maintain the distinction between necessary criticism and self-destruction, so that we do not cut our nose merely to spite our face; our capacity to organize implementation of whatever programme and policies we may correctly evolve; last, but not the least, on reducing the gap between promise and performance and, generally, between what we say and what we do. The mutual interaction of all these variable factors, none of which could be assumed to be constant, makes political forecasting hazardous especially within the small segment of time of a mere decade.

Therefore, all that one can do is to analyze the economic and political situation in the country so that we may be able to understand the forces which are making for change and those which impede it. Such an analysis is based on no larger assumption than what the historian, E H Carr, made in his little book entitled *What is History?* Carr wrote:

The tension between the opposed principles of change and continuity is the groundwork of history. Nothing in history that seems continuous is exempt from the subtle erosion of change; no change, however, violent and abrupt in appearance, wholly breaks the continuity between past and present.

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The first part of this article was published in the Independence Day Number of *Socialist India* in 1973. The second part we found in the typescript form among Shri P N Haksar's personal papers at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.



The tension in our country today manifests itself in a variety of ways. Its uglier aspect is all too visible in the current mood of self-destruction into which the organized political parties have fallen. From the shrill noises coming out of our Parliament, which our poor people maintain as a proud symbol of democracy, it would appear as if we are engaged in collective flagellation which merely exhausts its participant instead of producing purposive excitement.

A country which is justly proud of its heritage of establishing truth by *tarka*, *vad vivad* and *shastrartha* has abdicated to unreason, to orgy of anarchist violence, and to establishing the absurd proposition that the strength of an argument is directly proportional to the loudness of voice — a strange proposition in a country, whose people are still accustomed to the gentle voice of persuasion of a Gandhi and a Nehru.

The mindlessness of our political life is tragically illustrated by the fact that, only the other day, one lot of Indians calling themselves *Mulkis* were tearing apart from limb to limb another lot who were non *Mulki*, though both speak the same language, profess the same faith, participate in the common cultural heritage and are condemned to live and die in India.

More recently, someone thought that the people of India, somewhat oppressed by the search for the daily necessities of life, might need some diversion and so revived the *tamasha* called Mysore-Maharashtra dispute.

One could go on adding up the symptoms of mindlessness from Assam, Orissa, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and elsewhere too.

Perhaps, the worst such act of mindlessness was the burning of a portion of the university campus of Lucknow. Setting fire to one's *Alma Mater* is like burning one's mother alive. As one looks at the ashes, one begins to wonder what truth or right these young men were wanting to assert. And if there are any political parties who are promoting all this, they should know that they are sowing seeds of their own destruction. Even the Nazis, despite their Teutonic efficiency, did not survive for long the orgy of violence of their storm-troopers.

One's mind instinctively turns away from all this ugliness to seek affirmation of one's faith in the destiny of our country.

Let us then calmly survey the road we have travelled and the changes, which have taken place since 15 August 1947, remembering always that the time span of 26 years is but a speck in the millennia of our history. It is important to remember this so that we do not become victims



of purely negative impatience — a cardinal sin often responsible for man's fall from grace.

On the eve of independence, our country presented a picture of a social, economic and cultural wasteland. Our arts and sciences were languishing; our crafts had all but died; our dances of which we have rich variety, both in its classical and folklorique forms, somehow preserved their original inspiration; in the land of Kalidas, Dandin, Bharavi and Magha, drama was dead and if music survived, it was because of the patronage of a few and the genius of some great artists. The national movement had produced ferment and stirrings but these had yet to assume shape and form and, above all, an interaction not with a privileged coterie but with the wider populace.

Our society, crying to burst through its shackles, just did not have that much of surplus energy which could see us through both our struggle for freedom and the urge for social renewal despite the brave efforts of many reformers, each one of which ended up by adding one more sect to a social structure already fragmented with its divisions and sub-divisions.

A sensitive soul like that of Tagore could only dream of the future of his motherland, hoping and praying that somehow we shall not cease to be fragmented by “narrow domestic walls” and that the “clear stream of reason” would not “lose its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit”.

As one turns towards surveying the economic condition of our country on the eve of independence, the wasteland does not look any less dreary. There is vast literature on the subject of India's condition — a product both of its social stagnation and economic destitution, brought about by almost two centuries of despoliation. The countryside, bearing the burden of increasing destitution and of population, lay desolate, haggard by an iniquitous land system propped up and preserved by an alien power for its purposes. Nearly a third of India was in the grips of a decadent system of princely States. Industrial development was only in its nascent form — a product of the compulsions of the two World Wars rather than the result of an organic evolution of our society. And when independence came, we willingly accepted the entire burden of the national debt and other onerous obligations, which we had earlier denounced as totally unconscionable.

Our children born after independence may not feel the humiliation of our bondage and its burdens. But those who have become peddlers of our ancient heritage should remember that despite all the great periods of our country's long history, we could not stand up to an Imperial power based on a small island, thousands of miles away and

which added insult to injury by consummating their conquest with the help of Indians. It is still relevant to remember this. That is why I gave priority to consistency in the commitment to our nation as the most important factor in the evolution of the destiny of our country.

As against the backdrop of the social, cultural and economic scene, which India presented on the eve of independence, we might briefly survey the changes, which have since taken place.

Despite the weaknesses inherent in the formation of our capital resources, we, as a nation, have produced, largely due to the vision of Jawaharlal Nehru, which the present Prime Minister has sustained with tenacity of purpose, an impressive accumulation of scientific and technological talent in the last 25 years.

Facts and figures might be terribly boring, but I might cite the evidence of so distinguished a person as Lord Blackett of Chelsea when he said that "India has built up since independence a massive and wide-reaching research and development infrastructure, capable, in principle, of bringing great social benefits, and so contributing to making a reality of Nehru's vision."

If our scientists, technologists and the wide variety of Research and Development establishments constitute a precious resource built up in less than 25 years, the establishment of large industrial complexes, both in public and private sectors, give to us a capability which is truly remarkable, if we could only settle down to facing the problems which the growth of industry and of an industrial society create.

Again, without burdening this article with a statistical data, I might once again quote Lord Blackett :

Some interesting comments on India's economy as seen from outside have appeared in a trade journal *Far East Trade and Development*. This was a special number commemorating in 1971, the twenty-first anniversary of India's Republic Day.

India is one of the top ten national markets in terms of gross national expenditure with its infrastructure in good shape and with industry expanding, it is a market that is expected to sustain, a good rate of growth. In terms of industrial and technological capability India occupies a place between the highly industrialized nations and the developing countries.

A significant development on the export front is the continuous rise in export of non-traditional items such as engineering products. From 1956 to 1969 Indian exports of

engineering goods increased from \$7 million to \$ 140 million, that is, a rise of eighteen-fold in 13 years.

For instance:

India ranks as the eleventh largest producer of machine tools in the world. Machine tools built in India range from simple lathes to special multipurpose machine tools for which there is a growing demand.

The output of machine tools is expected to rise at 10 per cent a year compound. Machine tools exports in 1970 were \$4 million: principal importers were Australia, UK, US and West Germany.

An experienced economist and consultant to the Indian Government, Austin Robinson, wrote:

There exists today in India the beginning of a great industrial state, and over the past twenty years a new generation of young engineers, technicians and scientists has grown up which is far more qualified to carry through the new round of development.

So much then for the scientific, technological and industrial development of our country. The story of growth of irrigation and power, of roads and road transport, of railways and communications, of shipping and airways is no less significant. And though we may not be able to make a selective concentration of effort, our progress in the fields of atomic energy, space programmes, electronics, Research and Development in defence and defence industries is, to say the least, interestingly complex.

The most crucial sector of our economy is of course agriculture. Agricultural statistics may not be reliable in our country, but in every branch of agriculture, viz., production of cereals, pulses, potatoes, sugarcane, spices, oilseeds, plantation crops, cotton, etc., the growth has been between 100 to 260 per cent with pulses, spices and oilseeds falling below the 100 per cent level.

The growth in livestock, poultry, piggery, fishery (including impressive growth of export of sea-food), dairy and dairy products is not inconsequential.

If our science and technology have grown, so have our arts and crafts. The post-independence years have shown a rather remarkable flowering of our ancient arts and crafts; of our dances, drama and music; of our painting and architecture.

We might pause for a moment and see the framework of the total process of change. All the countries in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America which have emerged as independent States in recent



years or are aspiring to assert their true sovereignty, face two common problems, viz., how to bring about national integration and, also create a viable state structure.

India is the only country which has so far been able to establish, within the framework of utmost democratic freedom, a federal state structure and a stable process of national integration.

The most populous State in Africa, south of the Sahara, Nigeria, had to go through a civil war to create a new State and to weld together its diverse ethnic people swayed by tribal affiliations. Democracy had to be given up.

Nearer home, in Pakistan, we had a rather painful experience of the failure in solving the problem of national integration.

And, in China, despite the revolutionary upheaval, a cultural revolution had to be organized to uproot the strong remnants of their Confucian tradition. Even so, the Chinese are still un-relaxed about the integration of their national minorities.

The broad principles we have adopted in stimulating the integrative forces have been sound. The most important of these are: democracy, secularism and socialism. Equally important has been the integration of British India and the Indian States. Our federal Constitution is capable of harmonizing the overall national interests with the needs of preserving cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity. Howsoever imperfectly conceived or haltingly applied, our planning processes have been conducive to national integration.

With the abolition of *Zamindari* system within a few years of our independence, the basic minimum step was taken to demolish the feudal social structure. The recent abolition of privileges and privy purses of the princely order was yet another step in freeing our society from the shackles of the past. Perhaps, the weakest of our efforts in national integration has been in the field of education despite its vast quantitative expansion.

Obviously, it will be fatal to conclude from the foregoing that we as a nation can rest on our oars. Life and living, be it of individuals or of nations, require continuous adaptation, change and renewal, in response to the problems which the very act of living poses.

However, we must retain a proper perspective of our national performance even in the midst of the serious challenges we face today. These, in our country are many. And some are, indeed formidable. We have to face them as a nation. We cannot do it unless we calmly assess the changes which have already taken place, identify the problems



which these changes have created and see the entire complex of interaction between change and continuity. It is proposed to deal with some of these problems in the next article.

## II

In Part I of this article I had referred to the impressive growth of scientific and technological talent of mother country. Its magnitude and diversity is such that one could justifiably list it as, perhaps, the most important achievement since independence. In the next quarter of this century, we are likely to emerge with front rank, measured by world scale. [...illegible...].

The very first problem is of organization of our scientists and technologists; the second is of management of science and technology on a national scale; the third is to arrange a systematic and organized interaction between scientists and technologists on the one hand, and government and various branches of the economy on the other; and finally, there is the problem of interaction between science and our society.

It is rather remarkable that to this day we do not have in our country a national organization for our scientists. The picture, on the contrary, is one of fragmentation of the scientific community in a series of enclosures and such communication that might exist across these enclosures is fitful and accidental. The annual meeting of the Science Congress, which could be made to be an event of national importance, is rather more ritualistic than purposeful. The National Academy has so far failed in its purpose. And while institutions do exist for promoting particular branches of science, e.g., medical science, it cannot be said that such institutions have succeeded in promoting the causes they seek to serve with any degree of success. And perhaps, the most isolated community of scientists and technologists is that which works within the enclosure labeled "Defence Science". Its isolation, often rationalized by alleged need for secrecy, impairs its self-confidence to an extent that it tends to be collaborationists. The lack of confidence on its part begets a corresponding lack of confidence on the part of consumers of its products, namely our Armed Forces, who prefer importation to its substitution.

The splitting up of the scientific community, both academic and that which is oriented towards specific objective, leads to national impoverishment instead of enrichment. This state of affairs could be easily remedied if government, which is the principal source of financing

growth of science and technology in India, were to make a determined effort so that we have in our country something corresponding to the British Royal Society or the Academy of Sciences in the USSR. Bearing in mind the largeness of our country and its diversity, we would need to have Science Academies in each of our states.

As for interaction between the scientific and technological community and government, various attempts made in the past have not produced satisfactory results. The Advisory Committee on Science and Technology was found to be inadequate. And so it was rightly wound up. This was followed by creation of a separate Department of Science and Technology as a necessary adjunct to our Planning Commission, with the National Committee on Science and Technology comprising a body of men to provide the necessary expertise, through which a linkage could be established between economic growth and the scientific and the technological input necessary for sustaining that growth.

As often happens in our country, a sound idea gets destroyed somehow. When the Minister of Planning was changed, he took with him the Department of Science and Technology as well as the National Committee on Science and Technology, as if these institutional arrangements were attached to him in person rather than to the institution of the Planning Commission. Thus the Department of Science and Technology as well as the Committee were divorced from their relevant milieu and ceased to be of any great relevance. And since the heads of large sectors of our scientific and technological effort are divorced from the National Committee, there is perceptible diminution in the effectiveness of the Committee itself. The fact that we permit such large deviation of purpose can only be accounted for by the yawning gap between the world of science and technology and the dominant socio-political system in our country, despite the fact that Jawaharlal Nehru devoted a good part of his life to promoting, what he called, "the scientific temper".

A writer on the *Rise of Industrial Society in England* perceptively observed that "inventive activity is closely related to the general condition of society; whether its members are of an enquiring frame of mind, whether it has the means and will to retain and disseminate knowledge, and whether it permits the adoption of new modes of production, with the inevitable threat to establish positions and incomes". Any observer of the behaviour pattern, of modes of thought and thinking processes of political leadership in every part of our political spectrum, will discover a common feature of our political culture, namely, a most disconcerting disregard for facts and a confusion between the subjective

and the objective. Undoubtedly, this state of affairs is the reflection of the fact that the entire superstructure of our society with its ideas, values, thought processes are still dominated more by the traditional society, which still looms large, than by the newly arising forces making for change.

The rate of change in the old superstructure has been retarded by the fact that our educational system and the media of mass communication have, for all these 27 years of our independence, failed to combat the old superstructure, despite the formal adoption of the rational principle that our society should consciously aim at promoting secularism and socialism.

The persistence of irrationality has also been helped by exigencies of democratic processes, in which it has been found to be politically beneficial to pander to the backwardness and irrationality of our social structure than to the needs of change. It is not surprising that in such an environment, there should be recrudescence of astrology, *tantrism*, absurd manifestations of religiosity, mushrooming of miracle men, pilgrimages to Tirupati and the Vindhyas, secret and furtive taking out of insurance policies with gods and goddesses. All this poses a sharp conflict between the methodology and temper of science and the methodology and temper of magic and superstition. Quite obviously, science, technology and society can meaningfully fertilize each other only by removing this contradiction.

When we come to the problem of establishing a living and creative nexus between science and technology on the one hand and industry and agriculture on the other, the problems of organization become of decisive importance. It is only in the measure that science and technology are enabled to answer the real problems of life and living that they become meaningful. Divorced from problems of life, be it economic, social or cultural, scientific and technological communities will remain an interesting sect in our society along with so many other sects in which we abound.

The first essential problem to solve is to create an organization within which choices of technology relevant to our developmental processes and needs for our exports for the world market are made. In all these years, the mechanisms through which this choice has been made have been *ad hoc* and unrelated to a national design. We have had unrealistic debates about various kinds of technology as if they are mutually exclusive. We obviously need a mix of technologies from the simple to one of intermediate complexity and the highest and the most modern, each corresponding to the need for growth of our wealth from



the rural sector, the small sector of industry to the most sophisticated sector of industry devoted to production of goods meant to stand on their own in the highly competitive world market. The lack of technology policy results also in the disorientation of the national scientific effort to feed those technologies. And when we succeed in making scientific and technological innovation, its feed back into industry and agriculture becomes extremely difficult for lack of organization.

Such then are the problems of our science and technology. Obviously, one or all these problems can be solved. We need a will backed by sustained effort to do it.

We might now consider the situation in the field of art and culture. In the first part, I had briefly sketched the great revival of art our country witnessed during the last 25 years. We have also set up a number of institutions devoted to the advancement of dance, drama, music, literature and painting. Government has also shown its awareness that there is a problem to be tackled in the cultural development of our country by having a Department of Culture attached to the Union Ministry of Education. However, the broad fact remains that neither the various Akademies nor, indeed, the Department of Culture have so far succeeded in their central purpose of stimulating and sustaining dance, drama, music, art and literature and to bring art in all its varied form to our people in a form, which will not only bring light to the darkness of their mind but also joy to their life of want and drudgery.

As for culture, what precisely it consists of? In the complexity of the Indian situation, we have not even attempted an answer.

It is not surprising that institutions such as the National Book Trust or the National Council of Educational Research and Training or Bal Bhavans, or the more recent Nehru Centres, remain mere symbols of our wanting to do something and not succeeding in doing it.

There is a great deal of talk, for instance, about Indian culture being a composite one. And yet one has the vaguest ideas of what precisely is the composition of our culture and how that culture, which is determined by our long history and tradition, has to change in order to be relevant to our aspirations for a democratic, secular and, hopefully, a socialist society. It is perhaps a measure of our cultural backwardness that we still continue to believe that word is the deed.

If we are to make any dent on the problem of bringing art to the people, whether in the form of dance, drama or music or in folklore tradition, a more substantial and, perhaps, a more imaginative effort is required than we have made, in setting up the offices of the various Akademies in New Delhi. Perhaps, a new look needs to be given to the



most popular vehicle for dissemination of art and culture, namely our film industry, and to see whether it cannot be made a far more powerful instrument for cultural change, if it could be freed from the tentacles of the financiers, who hold to ransom even the most creative film-maker in our land. Another medium, which could have been a powerful instrument for change in the artistic and cultural revival of our country, is the network of our radio stations. But our whole broadcasting system, its techniques, the professional component in it, is woefully inadequate for exploiting its vast potentialities.

The insensitiveness to the problems of art and culture on the part of those who claim to be leaders of the community, either by reason of their affluence or because of their public position, is truly remarkable and constitutes a source of frustration to our dancers, musicians, poets and play-writers, sculptors and painters. We have, for instance, Raj Bhavans and Rashtrapati Bhavans all these years since our independence and as far as I know, these remain largely barren except on occasions when foreigners are to be entertained. As for captains of our industry, barring a few honorable exceptions, none of them have any time for art and culture and are less concerned than the princely order, which has passed away.

# BUILDING THE NEW MODERN INDIA

## I

The distinguished Vice-chancellor of the University of Calcutta, my esteemed friend, the Director of the Indian Statistical Institute, Dr J K Ghosh, my very esteemed and dear friend Dr Purnendu Kumar Bose, Swami Lokeshwarnandaji and I find someone whom I greatly admire is also present here, which makes the task of my speaking a little more difficult than it might have been, Dr Bhabatosh Dutta, and dear friends. I am not indulging in any contrived sense of humility when I say that I do feel a sense of inadequacy in addressing an audience of this kind in Calcutta.

I still do not quite know what made my very dear esteemed friend, Dr P K Bose, to think of me as a kind of person who could be selected and thus honoured for delivering a memorial lecture in the memory of Dr Subhendu Sekhar Bose. Honestly I do not really know. There is no doubt as you Dr J K Ghosh read out today: some kind of legitimacy I might have acquired in standing up and spouting, that I always like to say and I would always like to believe that I have, if any credentials at all in speaking under the auspices of this great University of Calcutta and in memory of Dr Subendu Sekhar Bose, it is not because that I am a scientist, physicist or a chemist or a biologist or an economist or a sociologist. I have no legitimacy in terms of any academic discipline. I might have, in my young days more than half a century ago, read mathematics, physics and chemistry and later on perhaps social anthropology, but that was really a long, long, long time ago. And it could be ideal on my part to pretend that, I have kept up with these academic disciplines of natural or social sciences.

I have, however, one little qualification and that lies in what I like to believe myself that I am, as it were, dismissed culturally (sic) a long stretch of time, now really three quarters of a century, not that I started observing the moment I was born witnessing what I call the human drama on this little earth of ours. I have seen the tragedies, the comedies, the farces enacted, affecting lives, destinies of millions upon millions of human beings. I have another reason for agreeing to speak in memory of Dr S S Bose because, obviously I did not have the privilege of knowing him, but hearing about him, reading about him I created an image of him in my own mind and that image resembles many images I have of great

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Lecture delivered in the memory of Dr Subendu Sekhar Bose at Calcutta University, 24 and 25 November 1987.

sons and daughters of this part of my country, called Bengal, and many of my sources of inspirations are situated here, whether through poetry or novels or writings. May be great Vivekananda's several volumes I have had the privilege of reading through, I have read Raja Ram Mohan Roy. I have read Tagore and I find that there was great deal of truth, there was, I say, a great deal of truth in what was used to be said at one time that what Bengal thought today, the rest of India thought tomorrow. And in my own attempt to evolve a some sort of framework, within myself, both spiritual, if you like to call it, or intellectual, a great deal of input has come from this part of my country.

It seems to me that S S Bose, as Mahalanobis talks about him, resembles in great details the peculiar characteristics of universalism which characterized the thought in Bengal. The thought transcended the concerns as it were of Bengal and embraced within them the broad concerns, social, economic, political, cultural concerns of the rest of the country. And that is why what was thought here became relevant to the rest of our country. That is reason enough for me to associate myself in my own little way in paying what little homage of tribute, I can pay, through the memory of late Dr Bose, to many luminous minds and spirits which lit up the moral and intellectual horizon of India through Bengal, and meant so much to me and continue to be so much to me today.

I have of course chosen a theme which requires some explanation. As I said that I have been, as it were, a witness to human drama on this earth. Even in the course of my working life I have had to work at varying times and in varying circumstances in different parts of the world. And I was, and I still continue to be haunted by the questions as to wherein lies the tragic part of human drama.

In search of this, I have read, what I call, sources of tragedy; one can say tragedies take place under divine inspiration. But I have refused to believe that if the idea of divinity is a valid one, that divinity could be malevolent. Divinity to me has no other meaning except God and love and compassion. And so it is not ordained divinely. It is not by fate. It is by some defect in the character of individuals who enact tragedy and of societies who enact tragedy. An insight was given to me by Goethe, the great German poet, philosopher, who wrote a book. The book had an interesting title, called *Elective Affinities*. And in that book he makes the observation that it is extraordinary about human beings that even in the midst of vast turmoil and trouble, they tend to think that nothing is happening or was happening. A similar thought occurs in another writer, whom I greatly admire, who is Maxim Gorky. Far away, one a German and other a Russian. Gorky said that most of us tend to be Philistines;

and who is a Philistine? He said that Philistines are to be found everywhere in large numbers and they are the kind of people who are so obsessed by their own mental paradigms, as it were, (these are not his words, these are my words, I am translating what he said) that if they by chance come across anything new, they tend to regard that which is new as an eczema and try to get rid of it. And it seems to me, I may be wrong, that while one could live as it were, in some distant medieval past, with this kind of mental framework — lack of curiosity, lack of anxiety, lack of concern as to things happening around you — the present century in which I was born and in which I would probably die, does not let us have the serenity, as it were, of contemplating, as it were, our own neighbourhoods and thereby to attain *Nirvana*. This century, or what remains of it, and a very large part of it coincides with my own life span, according to my way of looking at it, and I submit it for your kind consideration, is not like any other previous historical time. In point of fact, no period is an exact replica of previous times. That is true. But the compulsions, as it were, of the twentieth century are such that we cannot predicate our action and thought on the assumptions, as it were, of continuity, durable continuity. Changes have taken place in this century and one has only to cast back one's mind not two thousands of years in the dim, historical past but merely this century.

As the century opens India, our country, is still under domination of Britain, the distant island. Large parts of the world are under British dominance. India is large of course, but they dominated partially in different form, in Egypt, China, in Malaysia, in large parts of West and East Africa, Australia, New Zealand and so on and so forth. Where Britain did not dominate, France, Holland, Portugal and, in the early part before the First World War, Germany dominated, especially in Africa. United States, protected by the Atlantic Ocean and its desire not to get entangled in European affairs and therefore protecting itself under the cover of, what is called, the Monroe Doctrine, dominated the entire complex of Central and South America, from which has come the echoes of the Banana Republic, the present turmoils in large parts of Central and South America including the Caribbean. This century has witnessed the disappearance of the British Empire, of the French Empire, of the Dutch Empire, of the Portuguese Empire, little Spanish enclaves, German enclaves in South-West Africa, and a good deal of turmoil in what was the domain of the United States of America, whether it is the Philippines or Central South America or Latin America.

Since I have only one legitimacy, and that as a diplomat, I can say from the narrow point of view of international relations, never before



in human history have international affairs been no longer simply a function of what diplomats do. Firstly, I should take the Congress of Vienna. It is simply derived from the activities of Talleyrand, Metternich and Castlereagh, those three prominent characters of the Congress of Vienna. Nowhere it is recorded that any considerations other than the pure structuring of "Balance of Power" counted. This century has not only witnessed the depredations of West Europe-centred imperial domains and thereby throwing up on the stage of history literally billions of people. It also witnessed a revolution in Russia, of which we are observing what is called the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It witnessed a national liberation struggle in China from 1911 to 1949. It witnessed vast turbulence within India for our own freedom movement which nominally started as it were in 1885 and came to some sort of fruition in 1947.

There are therefore, when we are living in the world of today, whatever might be the furnishings of the human mind we might have inherited from our past, those furnishings are not longer adequate and are in fact impediments to the true perception of contemporary reality. I would contend, two prominent features of our contemporary times are palpable and noticeable. They have even made their entry into the arena of what was known as diplomacy as interactions between a greater [...illegible...] One I would like to call, once I have written about it also, the explosion of, what I call, human concernedness in the twentieth century. And side by side an explosion of science and technology. In a best-taken way, people say the changes taking place in science and technology are exponential. There were societal changes, but not keeping pace with the exponential growth rate of man's knowledge about this world, this nature, and about the universe. This is, if I may say so, the background of our living, working, surviving, prospering as a country or, I should like to call it a nation. And in whatever we may say or do or think, the palpable reality of our times, must not be, I submit, missed. And if we miss it, then we shall be enacting great tragedies, and quite unnecessarily so.

As I have contended, the tragedy lies in the circumstance, that en masse, most of us, even the intelligentsia, wake up in the morning, busy ourselves in the routine of the day, end up at night, go to sleep, get up again. If you are engaged in intellectual exercise and curiosity, you may fracture this deadly routine of daily life, but we cannot and do not. We are bound down. The peasant is bound by the seasons, the factory worker by the siren, the office worker by the time schedule and so on millions upon millions like that life and it is hard to expect that one would be sensitive, as it were, to what is new, what is unique, what is distinctive

in our day and age and one may then tend to go back to the past as a transcendental function. To illustrate this, I take a concept called “nation”, because we are going to talk about and discuss about what is called “nation building”.

A nation, or what is called a modern nation, — China for instance, is consciously trying to carry out four modernizations — or a modern nation-state, to be very precise in terms of political lexicography, is it part and parcel of nature as it were, or is it a willed enterprise on this earth? We often fail to face this question and find escape roots into saying that there has always been an India or *Bharata*. That we are the repositories of that unique thing called “Indianness” or *Bharatiyata*. That alone and that *Bharatiya Rashtriyata* inheres in us, the implication being that no new efforts, no new understanding of the nation-building process is involved.

I do not want to tire you into escapes of history, but since I am everyday confronted with this argument even within the framework of the National Integration Council, and in terms of new ideologies, which are being propagated of the *Hindu Rashtra* or *Rashtra* conceived in religio-cultural terms, as it were, it is necessary to remind ourselves, I submit, that the modern nation-state in terms of history is, if you take the total scale of human history on this earth, very very recent. I do not want to go back to dim and distance past. I pick up any date arbitrarily in our mediaeval times, what is called *Madhyakalin Bharat*, choose a date, it could be any date but I like to choose 1556, I just see India in the context of the world at that time. It is the reign of Akbar, Mughal dynasty. About the same time in China, there is the Ming dynasty, in the process of transition to the Manchu dynasty. Japan was not even — there Japan is still engaged in the sixteenth century in inter-tribal conflicts and worries. From there you turn to the east and traverse the entire expanse of what to day is the Soviet Union and what was earlier the Soviet empire. We find in 1556, conflicting nobilities of the kingdom of Kiev and the kingdom (even that was not a kingdom, so to say) of Muscovites; conflicting nobilities not able to evolve a common “king”, to whom they could owe an allegiance. The Romanov dynasty arrives little later and continues upto 1917. Further west, coming to Germany, only to find that in 1556 there is no Germany. All the German territories are divided into Prussia, into Bavaria, into Baden Luxemburg, into North Rhine Westphalia and so on, and Hanover, Hamburg, various principalities with their nobilities and so on. You turn further west to France. France is governed by the Bourbon dynasty, of which it was said that Bourbons were the kind of dynasty who learnt nothing and forgot nothing. You turn across the channel, turn to

England, you might expect that there is Great Britain, but there is no Great Britain. There is England under the Tudor dynasty and Queen Elizabeth is about to ascend the throne after a great deal of conflict and turmoil among the nobility of England, and Great Britain does not emerge as United Kingdom of England until 1707. Germany does not emerge until 1871. Italy does not emerge until about the same time — sixties and seventies of the nineteenth century.

And therefore, in terms of mediaeval times, India had a political organization based on a dynasty as we have in the earlier times, the *Maurya*, the *Gupta*; in south, the *Pallava* kingdom, the *Chola* kingdom, the *Kakateya* Kingdom, the *Satavahana* Kingdom and so on and so forth. That was the normal pattern. But if you measure what happened between 1556 to 1757, and we are appropriately present in Calcutta to commemorate the memory of 1757, then you know that little England, or Great Britain, emerging united with Industrial Revolution firing off the society and its economy — and I think its value system, which is its own turn in European History is inspired by two great processes, called the Renaissance and Reformation. The struggle to unify Germany, which ended in 1871 on 16 January in *Palais de Versailles* at the end of the Franco-Prussian war, inspired by reforms against the Holy Roman empire, which had degenerated; in the name of Christ there appeared the Pope who set up an empire. The inter-penetrations of the secular and religious, the powers of the Pope as well as of the Church, intermingled into fantastic corruption, which made Luther to make his last demands, about 46 demands for reformation of that church — I admit of no intermediaries between me and my God. There are books you have, written about Protestant ethics, the religion and rise of capitalism, the effect of Renaissance, the inquisition and Galileo, the suppression of his book *Discourse* and its smuggling through northern Europe and thereby firing Renaissance, of which the central point was questioning and reason and rationality, against established Authority (with capital A).

Of course, history does not repeat itself but tendencies, perceptions, European, Chinese, Indian, have a validity. So we are, therefore, when the British conquered us in 1757 in Calcutta, in the Battle of Plassey, where a whole army of the *Nawab* of Bengal was humiliatingly defeated by not an army imported from Great Britain but rather locally recruited sepoys, and by a handful of them and suffering a handful of causalities. It is in my view, for what it is worth, whoever might have contemplated this destiny of an ancient civilization (and we are proud to be an ancient civilization), of what we are proud? It is said in Sanskrit:



## साहित्य संगीत कला विहीन-साक्ष्यात् पशु पुच्छ विशाणहीन प्रणाम स्वयाध्यात् बनमानुसाभ्यां-तद्भक्तां पशुनाम्

*Sahitya, Sangita, Kala* — sensitiveness to these constitute the essence of culture and civilization. And we are proud creators of our own *sahitya*, both sacred and profane, we are creators of our own music, we are creators of our own *kala*, of architecture and such a glorious heritage of that. And yet, despite the glory that was, in that somebody said, Balsham said, in his book, the fact remained that making a modern nation-state or building a modern nation-state has not been part of our historical experience. And the counterpart of that transition from an agricultural civilization to industrial civilization had not been made.

So, nation building is our continuing problem. And may I say one more thing: nation building is never completed. That means, cohesiveness, unity, well-being, happiness, prosperity of human beings sharing a common territory (as we have shared for thousands of years which we call *Bharat* or *India* or *Hindustan* or *Al-hind* as the Arabs call it) is never a process which you can say like completing a building, that we have completed the building; everywhere in the world, more so today, when there is an explosion of human consciousness, the identity problem and the transcendence of that identity into something larger and bigger remains an ongoing problem. You might say since 1707 to 1987 is a long stretch of time for Great Britain to have experienced the unity, coherence of Great Britain. Yet today problems arise. — Scotland and Wales. In the Inter-relationships, in aspirations, in perception of aspirations, as yet there are some fundamentals which one cannot overlook.

A nation-state — a modern nation-state — is produced, consummated, not to sustain the relationship of *Raja* and *Praja*, but to sustain the mass of people called its citizens and their state. Actually the word citizen is an English word. In Hindi we have tried *nagarik*. It has not yet been heavily treated in our history or in minds; *nagarik* does not mean exactly what the French Revolution produced, called “citizen”, from which is derived the term “citizenship”. A citizenship in a modern nation-state is a concept of relationship between human beings living in a given territory and the state, in which you do not ask a citizen what his religion is, what his caste is, what his region is, and they collectively enter into, as it were, a social contract. In fact Rousseau had profound insight when he said that society changes from being governed by concepts of status to concepts of contract. Citizen means individual emergence of free



individuals who can enter into contracts. Therefore, quite rightly, and since Indian independence came in the wake of partition, and the partition was a result at least at a level of ideas that there are irreconcilable conflicts between two nations in this country — defined as Hindus and Muslims; one sensed that this was a false analogy with concept of nationhood or nationality and yet in the peculiar circumstances in which both the national struggle was conducted and in the way in 1947 the British departure took place, it is extraordinary that while a partition of Bengal which could be prevented from 1905-1910, partition of India could not be prevented at the apex of the rise of Indian nationalism.

I would submit if you are a professional historian, you probably provide with an answer to this. And the answer probably lies in the fault in the conceptual apparatus we had of nation-building process. On the one hand, we had a constitution in which we said, “We, the people of India,”. We did not say, “we, the Telegus, Tamils, Malaylis, Bengalis, Kashmiris, Rajasthanis, Marathis of India decide to create this Democratic Secular Republic”. But there is a concept called, “The People”. The creation of concept called “people” — it remains a problem, although seemingly the Preamble thinks that this has been solved. We are democratic, and let it be said that in the process of nation building, one of the most important critical crucial decision, which has stood us in good stead is, whatever the circumstances of India of 1947, to at least proclaim the principle of “one man, one vote”. “One man, one vote” means that we do not ask whether you are a *Brahmana*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaisya* or *Sudra*, you are a *Jat* or *Ahir*, or a *Malayali*, or a *Kanyakubja Brahmana* or *Suddh Brahmana*, you are a citizen entitled to one vote.

I know that recently the BBC has produced a programme called, *From Raj to Rajiv*, in which one of our distinguished Civil Servant and a very dear friend of mine, Mr B K Nehru raged against Mr Jawaharlal Nehru for having accepted the principle of “one man, one vote”. He thinks that was the biggest disaster. That is one perception. According to my way of looking, amid a variety of disasters which overtook us, at least one thing would stand out, if we are to proceed with the process of nation building, is its existence and all these years the habit formed and the right felt by millions and millions of people that whether a Birla or a Tata or a landless labourer, you have at least a right. These circumstances are excised, may be circumscribed in any other way, but in terms of consciousness, this right has established itself in our country and it would be very hard for any one, as the sorry and sordid episode of Emergency proved in course of small segment of time for three years, to suspend the operations of what is called democracy.

So, Mr Chairman, and friends [...missed presumably while changing cassettes...] And we often said that this is in contrast to the Islamic Republic or the North Western Frontiers. In my view for what it is worth, and as events, tendencies, ideas appear and reappear in India of today, secularism is no doubt there written in English language but we have, in my view, not even began to cope with it. We have sought refuge in what I submit is entirely a false perception. That secularism is somewhat a uniquely European phenomenon, that in India secularism takes a different shape and form and acquires different meaning. This subject is complex, but I could say that secularism does not, cannot and ought not to mean what we go on saying it means: equal respect for all religions. Equal respect for all religions is a doctrine of Talleyrand, which all civilized human beings ought to practice. In fact it was the Ashokan pillars which said that if you respect other people's religion, you enhance the value of your own religion. You might say secularism is in that sense as age old as the Ashokan empire, which goes back to the sixth century BC.

Now, secularism is a universal historical process — it operates in India, it operates in China, it operates in Europe, it operates anywhere and everywhere. What is this process? A continuous demarcation between that which we know and handle by our knowledge and that we do not know. Therefore, the public domain which concerns itself with polity, economy, education, research and science and technology, their interrelationships, the patterns of growth and development are secular matters. They cannot be managed, handled or subsumed under any other historical process except the secular process. Of course, this is a long, time-consuming process especially in India. We have carried with us the weight of the past. And however much you may argue yourself out of the past, or at least the negative features of the past, I personally think that Gautam Buddha was arguing himself of a measure of our past as appeared in his life-time as source of misery of human beings — the rigid *Brahmanical* ritualism of his time. I take Muhammad was responding to the tribal barbarism of the Arab Bedouins. I believe, Jesus was responding to the extraordinary decadence combined with self-assurance of the Judaic civilization.

That is one way of looking at it, to distill the essence of human endeavour to cope with the problems of the time. Since India is continuing society with continuity with the past, as in China, and having visited China I see that they too have to grapple with that kind of super-structure of ideas, practices, beliefs inherited from the past, which are not in consonance with any concept which you call change,

howsoever you may define it. So, since it is a long-time process, the crucial importance under Indian conditions of a secular state are of cardinal significance for our growth, survival and development.

I would dwell a little more before I conclude today's lecture on a secular state. We seem to think that we have established a secular state. In a sense rights, liberties, freedoms of Indian citizens are not in any way diminished, altered, controlled by the primordial consciousness obtaining in our country expressing itself in terms of caste, expressing itself in terms of religion, expressing itself in terms of language or region; that is true. In law, there is a (term) equality — that is a secular principle. In practice, we have tried to get out of our dilemmas and perplexities by providing in our Constitution what is called respect for minority rights. And respect for minority rights, coupled with the definition that the state in India respects all religions equally, we have today, in the last 40 years grown institutions and even in very sensitive areas of education which promote what are called narrower concepts than the larger concept of transcending deep primordial molecular units of our society namely *Jatityata*, *dharma*, *majhab*, *prades*, *bhasa* and so on.

And I submit that the sooner we address ourselves to these problems the better it is. In my view the problem is not of what is called national integration. National integration is a misnomer according to me because it creates an impression as if the diversities can be integrated. No. There has to be a multi-level consciousness, there will be for thousands of years people speaking Bengali living in Bengal, there will be thousands of years people living in Tamil Nadu and speaking Tamil and absorbing, what is called distinctive features of their tradition and culture. And so there would be the Malayalis, the Andhras, the Gujratis, the Kashmiris and so on and so forth. Now, what is required is not national integration but nation building. And the question is: what shall be the bricks of this building? First and foremost, as I said, is that alienation must at all cost be avoided and one of the alienations that haunted us and resulted in partition was the so-called great divide of the Hindus and the Muslims. The question is: how do you resolve this? You cannot resolve it within the framework of equal respect for all religions translated as a state-level policy, and indeed if one has eyes to see and ears to hear in India of today, then there is somewhere a failure in the way we have addressed ourselves to this problem of transcending the primordial divides: *Jatityata* divide, *dharma* divide. And we are worse. We have rationalized it by saying that the spiritual/ritual aspect in India is so indivisibly linked up with *dharma* and *majhab* that if you divorce religion from politics, you drain all spirituality out of it.



This brings us, and I pose this question, I have tried to deal with it; what we mean by religion? What is after all this word which we use: religion in English? *Dharma*? Only a week ago, I was passing by a part of Delhi and I saw a meeting going on and I heard a voice. It says, *Bhaiyon aur Bahenon, Dharma kya hai?* What is religion? And went on by saying that *Dharma* is doing one's duty. That is good. He went on to illustrate what is then "duty"? He says. Parasuram's father asked his son to kill his mother because she was apparently unfaithful; that is *dhamapalana*. I should like to ask: is this example of Parasuram, who apparently destroyed the *Kshatriyas* several times over, an appropriate aspect of our myth and legend or if you like to call it religion defined in those terms? What is the answer when Draupadi asked Bhishma pitamaha the question as to whether the great Bhishma pitamaha thought that what was being done to her, *Chiraharan*, was right or wrong — whether the brothers had the right to pawn her? Bhishma pitamaha, so far as it is known to me, kept quiet. Tell me what is right and what is wrong. And, is it in religious terms? Ekalavya — what Dronacharya did to Ekalavya, is it right or is it wrong?

That is to say, we are driven to examine the domain of religion, rescue religion, as in Europe Reformation rescued Christianity from the papacy, rescue religion from all its encrustations and then see that it pertains to the domain as he [Luther] said of the relationship of "me and my God". Or, one can have a definition that religion or religious feeling like poetry, expresses deep emotions and these emotions cannot be explained, their reason, why, but we know that love and compassion, tears of joy, tears of sorrow are part and parcel of human nature; we still do not know how they happen and why they happen. Therefore, in my view, large questions are involved in the process of nation building in India. And from nation building there is no escape. In the world in which we are born and the kind of world which is evolving with its explosion of science and technology, with its conflicts — you travel beyond India, just to the West, to the East, and anywhere you like, there is a turmoil and turbulence of which one aspect, an over-advertised aspect perhaps, is that for the first time in human history what was considered as legitimate by every school of diplomacy, suddenly ceases to have any meaning, namely, war, in a nuclear age. Despite the sermon on the mount, despite the great Buddhist tradition, despite the tradition of Islam, God the Merciful and of Peace, human beings have engaged in war. Tribal chiefs have engaged in war, kings have engaged in war, nation-states as they emerged engaged in war and one of the philosophers of war — Baron Von Clausewitz said, though in terms of European diplomacy, that war is a legitimate instrument, it is merely a means of continuing your policies by other means.



This is by way to illustrate that we in this country have to carry on this great transformation from an ancient society to a modern society — in an age which is turbulent, where materials, where capacities for communications — inter-communications between human beings — where capacities for creating sources of energies, where capacities for creating new bases for medicine, for biology, for agriculture, are dramatically arising. That nation building and development process about which I shall talk in detail, I hope tomorrow, have to be carried out in this macro atmosphere of the real world of today and tomorrow and there is no escaping from it. You can see it, you take the year 1884. The month was June. Five powers sat in Berlin. European Powers. They spread out a map on their table. Each one took a coloured pencil red, green, blue, what have you — and they drew lines across the continent of Africa — and Africa was divided and there was not a stir or a murmur or anything. People argue that in the bi-polar world one cannot but reach a stable equilibrium by division in the world in terms of spheres of influence. It is, I submit, no longer possible. Even the little wars in Korea and Vietnam and the continuing conflict in West Asia, the continuing conflicts going on in several places in Africa, the conflict in Nicaragua, in El Salvador, in Guatemala, in Brazil, in Peru cannot be understood unless we see them in the context of the real world. There is a tragedy in the fact that human perception and reality do not have one to one correspondence. As I say I have been witness to human drama on this earth; I was witness in 1938 to a little drama in London. The Prime Minister of Great Britain, Mr Neville David Chamberlain (and prime ministers by definition are not idiots — they ought to know, they ought to understand, they ought to have at their disposal analysis of a situation) announced — I happened to be present on that occasion in 1938 — that he has signed a paper with Adolf Hitler which ensured peace in his time and within eight months of that famous declaration, World War II began.

Now I submit to you as a last thought, where did the perception go wrong? I submit, perceptions go wrong because large masses of human beings, of which the intelligentsia are a part, are not prepared to reexamine the given paradigms they have inherited or they have imbibed and thereby not allow reality to be truly reflected through the prisms of their furnishings. Such tragedies have happened, would happen. We may not care what happens anywhere else, but if we do not perceive with clarity our problems — historical problems of India — of nation building, development — then I regret to say that we shall enact tragedies, and tragedies have happened in nations' histories.

## II

Mr Chairman, Dr J K Ghosh, the distinguished Pro Vice-chancellor of the Calcutta University, Dr Sinha, Dr P K Bose and friends.

I must offer you my apologies in advance because I am, as I stand here this afternoon, somewhat distracted and, if I may say so, I am also very tired. I fear that I might become incoherent although I shall make my best effort not to be. But I hope you will be kind and forgiving if I do appear to be somewhat incoherent.

Perhaps I should begin for the sake of continuity by briefly restating the main structure of the argument which I endeavoured to present yesterday. It might be even desirable to do so because there might be some who may not have been present here yesterday. I shall endeavour to be brief.

My first statement was that modern nation-states are very very recent part of human history. If one measures human history in let us say 5000, 6000, 10,000 years, modern nation-states are barely two to three centuries old. They are not to be found in nature. They are not created by acts of God. If I may add as a footnote to that observation, I have always contended that none of the great religious revelations contained in either the works of the prophet, the Holy Kuran, or the works of another prophet — Jesus, in the Bible, or to the writing and sermons of Buddha — nor indeed in the *Upanisadas* or the *Vedas*, do we find any articulation of what might be called political structures. I often say to my friends who might belong to one political party or the other that while god created or engaged in the act of creation (the biblical stories that the god created the earth, the moon, the stars, in six days and rested on the seventh day; if one goes by the cosmology of *Manusmriti* it begins with the very interesting logical position: the god there is referred to as *Swayambhu* because the concept of *Swayambhu* answers the question, if there is a god, then who was there before god, so *Swayambhu* is a very nice logical concept created; and then there is of course the [...illegible...] floating on the *nara*, on the waters, and how the creations took place; or the story of the creation after *Samudramanthan*, nowhere, I say, god created a political party. Political institutions, political parties, means and mechanisms of transformation — social, political, economic, cultural, are assumed functions of a faculty, which human beings have, of thinking, of co-relating, of observing and so on. Out of this arises tribes, tribal kingdoms, other kingdoms, empires and finally, through this interaction, which takes place in any society, arises ultimately in the period of the Industrial Revolution or on the eve of Industrial Revolution, the modern nation-state.

I submitted secondly that though our civilization and history is long and glorious, and one can be proud of great many things in it, the experience of building a nation-state is not part of that history until we began doing so first of all through the freedom movement and more concretely and specifically after the attainment of our independence. The second point I was making yesterday was that the process of nation building or creating within India, an ancient society, a modern nation state, is an on-going process. It is on-going even in a very established state system. Why is it so? Because, obviously, while the structure may remain within it, human aspirations, ways of doing things, change and changes have to be perceived in time so that the structures do not become brittle. Otherwise, the day they become brittle, tensions arise within and structures loosen and then there is disharmony, even decay and disintegration. Disintegration is part and parcel of history — the great poet Iqbal, when he contemplated India, was struck by a very remarkable thing; he said that whereas Greece and Rome and Egypt, the Egyptians, who had pride of great civilizations, each of them — the Greek civilization, the Roman civilization, the Egyptian civilization, not to mention the Babylonian, the Syrian civilizations — they all vanished, disintegrated and that somehow, through vicissitudes of time, India has survived as a continuity. He should have mentioned that there is another country — China — which has survived with a continuity of thousands of years of its past, which is in a sense an advantage, which also creates problems.

The second point I mentioned and drew your attention to was that we have to carry out this enormously difficult task of nation building in an ancient society like ours in this part of this twentieth century and beyond, not in isolation. We are not an island unto ourselves. We live in a real world, in a real time, real space and we have to work out our destiny, our designs in that real world. And I said that the two most optimistic aspects of distinctiveness of our contemporary world of the twentieth century rise in two elements, which must be taken into account very consciously. If we are to do social, political, economic engineering in our times. That arises out of the circumstances which never obtained before in the nineteenth, eighteenth, seventeenth, sixteenth, fifteenth, fourteenth centuries and that is why I use a very picturesque phrase, explosion of human awareness and consciousness. Indeed there is a little old poem which now, as I stand here, comes to my mind; which used to say that man's cares were bound by few paternal acres.

That was the vision of a man, or human being: bound by few paternal acres — what happened beyond those acres were not his



concern. There was not that mobility, there was not that communication, there was not that need of interlocking, interdependence of an industrial society in medieval and earlier times. So it is not surprising. But in the twentieth century, the process of explosion of human consciousness expresses, itself in revolutionary upsurges in Russia, in China, in India, in Africa, in Latin America, we have — it is not a matter of rhetoric, it is a matter very relevant to the social and economic science, very relevant to political science, very relevant to another very important factor — another explosion called the explosion of science and technology. If you take simple time span, somebody has given a time space, and I give it to you for your consideration, it is exciting to look at it.

Someone has said that 50,000 years of human history can be accounted for by 800 lives, assuming that each life is 62 or 63 years in span. And it is a fact and not a matter of disputation, that out of these 800 lives, human beings have lived 750 lives in caves; they were in a cave-dwelling stage. If your curiosity is excited by this way of looking at human history, you read a report submitted by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration of America on how technology and science have been changing fast, and faster than the social structures, thought structures, idea frameworks within which human beings live in societies. So that 750 lives out of 800 have been spent in caves. All that we see today, the way we consume food, the way we grow food, the seeds of the food that we grow, the way we transport ourselves, the way we communicate with ourselves, the energies, sources that we command are all a product of a bare life and a half. Indeed in 1935, when I left the shores of my country and travelled to England, there was no regular available air transport one went by sea — and the voyage from Bombay to Tilbury, London was 21 days' voyage. Then from 1935 to, let us say 1960, when the jets became common instead of propeller engines, the voyage to England is barely of eight hours and if you have supersonic transport it would be three hours.

The communication revolution is palpable; you can see it, you can feel it; the biological revolution is palpable, you can feel it, experience it and these advances have a tendency to grow not exactly, but to dramatize it — exponentially — whereas human ideas, social structures, value systems, grow very very slowly and gradually. That is why you have problems of interaction of some new and old ways of doing things. And these, through science and technology, knowledge derived through science becomes, let us say  $S^3$ , as the geometrical concept has it, with social systems, thought processes.

The final point I submitted yesterday for consideration was that if



one traces what are called the tragedies in human history, I, for one, would contend very strenuously, that tragedies are rooted in the fact that the human mind allows itself to be dominated by our yesterdays to an extent that it cannot see the reality of today. I can illustrate this, how a outmoded, out-dated concept is used to read this reality in, let us say, the arena of international affairs, with which I am a bit more comfortable than with anything else. The United States of America totally unmindful of the logic of nuclear age, developed, quite consciously, and there is a documentation for it — an idea derived from the nineteenth century experience that in the world emerging out of the second World War, they could create a universal structure corresponding to the perception of American influence. The unkind would call it the idea of American century, the idea of American global hegemony, or somebody would call it the idea of global American imperialism. Having conceived of this, and this is documented in a report completed in 1939 and published much later, prepared by the State Department of the United States of America and the Council of Foreign Relations, a committee was set up to perceive what kind of world would emerge out of the Second World War and what would be the American response to that world. And the report said that continental America would certainly emerge — it was before Pearl Harbour — unscathed, unlike Europe or Russia or Japan as it happened; that United States would have overwhelming dominance in economics, in science and technology and it happened later on; they thought they have a monopoly of nuclear weapons too, which was breached in four years time — 1945 is the year of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6 and 9 August — and then 1949 is the year, when the Russians also exploded their device.

Given falsity of perception, there logically follows falsity of structures built. They built the structure for Middle East Defence Organization (MEDO). They did not ask themselves about the viability of such structures in this age, where there is an explosion of human consciousness due to the very processes of national struggle, decolonization, the breakdown of the European Imperial systems, which were very grand and very great in their times and very powerful too. MEDO was built in 1952. In six years' time the main person on which it rested, called Noor-E-Sayeed Pasha of Iraq, was brought down. His body was dragged by Iraqis through the streets of Baghdad. Why? The answer is, as somebody said, time had changed. We are not living in the nineteenth century, we are not even living in the world of the First World War, we are not even living in the world which ended with the Second World War or the beginning of the Second World War. It is a new world. We have to live in that and this is universal.

Not being content with the breakdown of the Baghdad Pact, called the MEDO, later converted into CENTO, they proceeded to say, okay, forget the losses, let us build ourselves on Shah-en-shah R E Mehr of Iran. I was involved in negotiations with Iran in 1973 to 1976 and had opportunity to talk to the great Shah-en-Shah. I used to observe that the large number of Iranian students dispersed in Europe and America, were constantly in agitation against the regime of Shah-en-Shah. And I asked this question to His Majesty; I said, "May I, Your majesty, have the liberty to ask a question which troubles me because I am very anxious to establish good relations between India and Iran?" He said, "Yes, Mr Haksar, please go ahead". I said, "How is it that in your country which can boast of 12 to 14 per cent growth of GNP, which has no oil problem, which has no foreign exchange problem, how come that your intelligentsia is alienated?" To which His Majesty's answer in 1976 was, "Mr Haksar, in every society there are a handful of people who are alienated for some reason or other and our intelligentsia belong to that but we take good care of them." In 1979 the question was who took care of whom? And Shah-en-Shah of Iran fled the country. What followed is a different story, is not germane to my argument, which I am trying to gather together in dealing with the problem of nation building and development process in our country.

I think Nehru and, of course, Gandhi were intensely conscious of this element in the world of today. Nehru was equally conscious and how so much I may disagree with him on a variety of matters, which I do or criticize him on variety of matters, which I do, at least he had a perception of the world emerging out of the Second World War, of which one ominous sign was the nuclear weapon and another hopeful sign was possibility of science and technology for human welfare, human well-being. Indeed, I may in parenthesis tell you something which I read somewhere, I think it was a book called, *Science of Science*. It was a book edited in honour of Professor J D Bernal, whom I remember as a distinguished scientist like Peter Kapitza, P M S Blackett, C P Snow and company. In that book I remember reading something to the following effect. I think it was C P Snow who said it. He said, it is often argued that politics is the art of the possible, which is flung at our face in the name of, what is called, pragmatism — Let us be practical, you know you are putting philosophical argument. These are all well but let us be practical, politics is the art of the possible. But he goes on to say, as one would expect Blackett to say, since it can be demonstrated that now with the help of modern science, and its derived process project called technology, it is possible to show that each human being can be fed, can

be clothed, his health taken care of, he can be educated; then the question for politics which will arise hereafter and it is, you can see arising, is: if this is possible through application of science and technology why is it not possible? Politicians, social scientists, economists, have to face this question that, on the one hand tremendous vista opened up by sanction of knowledge, knowledge goes for society — social sciences, natural sciences — then how come that if it is possible to feed, to clothe, to banish the hunger of the heart and the famine of the brain, to educate people in millions upon millions, why is it not done?

It arises directly; it is a function in a mathematical sense, function of “C” called consciousness or *chetana*. In today's world you can go anywhere or travel the nooks and corner of what was called the dark continent of Africa. I had been to Nigeria for four years, I had been to Central Africa, I had been to Congo — Congo Brazzaville, Congo Kinshasa — travelled and this dark continent is lit, as it were, by new inspirations, new conceptions, new demands of a vision, of a life, of fulfilment.

Now, nation building, as I said, first of all, has to be a matter of clarity of concepts; that we in India are involved in nation building under concrete, specific, historical circumstances of ourselves. We, cannot replicate what took place in Great Britain when England, Wales, Scotland united in 1707. We cannot replicate what took place in 1871 when Germany emerged as united. We cannot replicate what took place in Italy when Italy united. We cannot replicate how the whole of the Czarist empire, consisting of greater diversities of language, ethnicities — greater diversities than ours — got unified from 1917 onwards. Although China seemingly appears more cohesive, ethnically or linguistically, the true fact about China is, that compared to us of course it is more cohesive than us. But even so within China, out of thousand million, 89.2 per cent of its total population is non-Han, assuming Han is a unifying principle. I submit that even Han is not a unifying principle because the perception of Szechuanese, the perception of Ho-lanese, the perception of Cantonese, the perceptions of those belonging to the north, are divergent from one another. Therefore, the problem of unification of China into a modern state, what is called the modernization process, may not be as difficult. The Chinese did not have the genius of the Indian Brahmins to produce *Varnasrama dharma*. It is a part of our genius. We created in our country *Varnasrama dharma* which can have a rationale; or perhaps one can argue it, but it was nearly a post-facto rationalization of localism, in India, on which



were imposed the concept of purity and pollution. On account of the diversification of skills and trades — the *jati* was born, which was then subsumed under the four-fold system called *brahmana*, *kshatriya*, *vaisya*, *sudra*. It is not that *brahmana-kshatriya-vaisya-sudra* first emerged historically and then the *jatis* began growing out of the subdivisions.

So we have to undertake nation building. What does it really mean? I submitted yesterday that it means the emergence of a concept of citizenship. The answer to “who are you” in India can be two-fold. One can say that I am an Indian belonging to Kerala or one can say I am a Malayali living in this territory called India. There is a dramatic quantum jump of transcendence in consciousness from being a Bengali, from being a Malayali, from being a Tamil, or being a Gujarati, into a consciousness — and not merely a consciousness — but what I call reciprocal duties and obligations towards the state in India. Now, it was assumed, and I submit falsely assumed, that the whole tradition of our national movement, of which we are all justly proud, gave birth to a nation. I hear in Calcutta *Swaraj*, *Swadeshi*, striving and struggles against the partition of Bengal; I can hear Kalpana Dutta's shooting in Chittagong; Kshudiram Bose, Netaji, C R Das. I hear all these noises or voices in my ear. A wide movement embracing multiplicity of perceptions of social reality, united with only one slogan and that was the British misrule or “*swaraj* is my birth right”.

That movement, due to the great genius of Gandhi, succeeded, because Gandhi saw it more shrewdly than almost anybody else, that to the first primary condition before the British to go, is to deprive the British, in the minds and hearts of not thousands or hundreds of thousands but millions upon millions, of their legitimacy, I should say, even moral legitimacy. And he carried the masses of India through this experience of struggles — partial struggles and long struggles — in which each Indian came to this conclusion. In earlier times, we hear of debates, of educated Indian elites, the children of Macaulay who were prepared to accept the moral superiorities of the British. It was assumed that in 1947 a movement — if you wish to call it a multi-class movement — embraced *zamindaars*, it embraced peasantry, it embraced working class, it embraced people like Walchand Hirachand, industrial classes, all contending for *Swaraj* in terms of their own perceptions. Such a movement certainly flows into a political party as an appropriate instrument for carrying out the nation building process as well as the essential part of it, the development process.

Nation building is not something that proceeds separately, from



what is called development, changes, social transformation, cultural transformation, economic transformation, scientific-technological transformation of an emerging society. The history of 1947 to 1967, a 20 year period. During this period the legitimacy of Congress in the masses of the people arising out of the sacrifices, strivings and struggles from 1885 to 1947 went a long way to give legitimacy even to the Congress party, even though Gandhiji said that it would be better to create a party. I think it was a shrewder perception. But Jawaharlal Nehru and his colleagues, out of a major obsession which each had in terms of his own perception, whether it was a conservative perception of Ballavbhai Patel or Rajagopalchari or a perception of Nehru who wrote about the discovery of India and reality of India, it was felt that in post-partition India with all its wounds and lickings of blood, it was best to emphasize continuity even when we wished to change India. And the Congress party was to provide the continuity of political instrumentality and the state apparatus — the civil service, the bureaucracy, the police, and the armed forces will — provide a continuity of instrumentality at the state level.

There are in this universe only two instrumentalities available for any act of change or transformation. One is called, for any better word, the political instrumentality and the other is, the state apparatus. This is, despite the vision that there might come a time when human beings will attain such high level of cultural consciousness and will drown all their negative values greed, anger, hatred and they will emerge as true representative of Homo Sapiens, as it is. That human vision is still valid and it is said that when such a thing happens, when men will not have to kill each other or compete with each other for fulfilling their requirements, both of food and lodging and spiritual requirements, the state would wither away. I often say, in India the only place where the state has withered away is Bihar and therefore poor Marx has come true in a wrong place. But that is only a joke! That dream of the state withering away and human beings coming into their own, managing their own affairs without the apparatus of the state may be a valid vision, but it is not realizable within my life time or even of those who are present here.

So, Mr Nehru's vision was that for our continuity. In fact, Mr Nehru delivered a lecture called *Continuity or Change*, rather more than a lecture, interesting reading to see how he saw things. In terms of how he saw things, for the sake of carrying this India forward both the instrumentalities (had to continue). The political had to be that which existed before, namely, the Congress, and the state apparatus what existed before, namely, the whole paraphernalia of Indian Civil Services,

Indian Police Services, Indian Audit and Accounts Services, the State Civil Services, with which right upto a *lambardar* or whatever you may like to call it at the village level. It was realized that with 83 per cent living in rural India, the accumulation process of capital savings and investments remained very low — economics namely wealth creation, wealth production and wealth distribution. As you know the Simon Commission computed that per capita national income of India was two pence per day per head. That was the measurement of the poverty, the degradation to which India was subjected first through the looting and arson of East India Company and later during the British Empire. In fact, if you are interested, you might read a book by Daniel Thorner on how the railways were built. When I was a student, the British used to say we built you the railways. But it was an engine for looting India — the building of railways.

So, in the conditions of such poverty, the state in India had to intervene, had to play a part and this was accepted even by the industrialists in the Bombay Plan. Mr Nehru saw that if once the state has to intervene in what is called economic developments — he saw with clarity that this cannot be left merely to the state to mobilize resources and hand it over for development or for interaction with market forces — that planning was an essential element in it. He saw clearly and he saw right. And he also saw clearly that the great tradition of the Congress would stand him in good stead for some time. Indeed, it stood in good stead in the 1952 elections, 1957 elections, 1962 elections. But in 1964 he died and in the first post-Nehru election in 1967, the Congress was found to be in disarray — in large parts of our country — Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh. And therefore the Indian experience of nation building on the assumption that, for the sake of continuity, old institutions can continue as it were without change was a false perception and has proved to be a false perception. Attempts were made from 1967 to 1969 to revive this Congress. As you know the Congress had lost heavily to SBD and even at the Centre it barely escaped and had a thin majority which was reduced to a minority in 1969. And the apparent historical role of Indira Gandhi was to renew the Congress by breaking it. Mr. Nehru would never have tolerated the idea of breaking it. Although it is possible to argue as an abstract proposition, and some would argue that if Sardar Patel had been the Prime Minister, Mr Nehru had been leader of the opposition, the state of our country might have been different. But that is mere speculation; we have to accept what really took place and one cannot deal with history by saying that if Cleopatra did not have the nose she had, what would have happened. That is problematic.

So, in the course of nation building and development process, the development process was largely subsumed under the category called economic development — investments. And there was a model produced by a very great son of India and great son of Bengal, Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis, called Mahalanobis Model, after months and months of wide ranging discussion between economists, social scientists, foreign economists and so on — called the two-sector model. My submission is that as we look back, the one cardinal mistake we committed (was in the field of) investments. That the social reality, the cultural reality, of India was not understood in operational terms of policies. At every point we produced a compromise. Our caste system and a concept of equality enshrined in the constitution and eschewed, are not harmonious, but we will somehow muddle through. The answer to social and economic degradations of the Scheduled Castes lay in what is called “reserved constituency” and reservation.

Secularism, as I contended yesterday, does not, even at the state level, mean equal respect for all religion. Actually if you are true to it, in the Gandhian spirit, then every state function should start with all the prayers of all the religions. I think even the cabinet meeting should then start, if you want to show equal respect for all religions with a recitation of the *Quran*, *Bhagavatgita*; there are Buddhists, so why not Buddhists? There are Christians — why not Christians? There are Jains. Why not Jains and so on and so forth — why not Sikh Guru, Nanak? We have lived with this confusion all these years; and because of this confusion the problem does not disappear, the problem appears and reappears in acuter forms. Caste was somewhat a subdued factor during the period of the freedom struggle. There are exigencies of politics, which are concerned with power. There is naturally a circulation called “power-money-power” instead of “commodity-money-commodity” — after all you go into politics to gain power. You may define its purpose, but what is the purpose? The only justifiable purpose is to build a modern nation state in India, to fight against the primordial and primitive social structures, which are dissonant with any concepts of equality, to find a mode of transcendence over the divide of Hindus and Muslims by seeing that there is a wall between the religion and the state as there is in the United States.

It is argued with some measure of hypocrisy amongst some of us that — oh, India is not United States, India is a spiritual country. Personally, if I may say so with great respect, this is not an original idea. It originated in the West; orientals, Indians are, OK, spiritual countries but they cannot manage the affairs of the world. As the British used to say,



you cannot be a modern nation-state, you are a countries of tribes, customs, manners with these things, you cannot become a state, a modern nation-state. The alleged Indian spirituality to which the alienators of the West pay homage is the biggest symbol of our mind, which is colonized still by Macaulay. I do not deny what is called matters of spirit and things, therefore, spiritual. According to me, matters of spirit (as I see) are matters concerning love, compassion, tolerance, co-operation with fellow human beings, because spirituality is a function for the need for human solidarity.

No society, no institution can exist if the balance is not in favour of solidarity but is balanced in favour of conflict. The family originated in the need for solidarity and, therefore, the need for preventing incest. The morality is based on need for solidarity. Precisely it exists, as individuals we go around, we love, we hate, we kill, we sustain, we co-operate and we quarrel. The function of society is to create a measure of equilibrium at a social, what I should say, a statistical level of averages of the society; that even if you cannot love your neighbour, as Christ said you should do, you should at least be not negligent, that is what the law says. If you are negligent, you commit a tort, civil wrong, in which you will be liable for paying damages. So, in the course of the economic transformation of a subsistence economy wrecked and ruined by 200 years of British imperial exploitation, it was assumed that if we can build infrastructures of irrigation, power, we shall pave the way, as it were for further advance, further growth, further prosperity with a proper distributive mechanism for the income and wealth generated.

In my view the social crisis in India, which manifests itself in recrudescence of primordial loyalties based on caste, on religion, the Hindu-Muslim, the *jat-pat* in Bihar, in Uttar Pradesh or in Gujarat or Maharashtra and so on, in Karnataka too, in Kerala also over the Nair-Ezhava divided, or the Namboodri-Nair divide, have regretfully, received new political life through the kind of political processes we have pursued; because we did not face upto the imperatives of secularization of the human mind in India erecting a secular state and seeing that the domain of religion and the public domain were separated. That is the crisis.

It is compounded by the fact that, with very great respect, many even economists did not see or politicians — it is true that even a man like Nehru did not see — that the primary input in any process of reformation and renaissance of a country (and we are engaged in nothing less than reformation and renaissance of our country in building the modern new India), that the most critical input in the human mind and its refurnishing;



and the only way to affect that mind on a mass scale is first and foremost the education process. In fact, when I entered the Planning Commission and I enquired as to what kind of staff, supporting staff, was there for education as a subject? We had for industry, one for agriculture and so on; we had a project appraisal division; we had a prospective planning division and all these kind of things; but we had three areas, which are/were areas of neglect. There was nothing really very much worthwhile except one man who dealt with education in India, another one, not even one who dealt with health problems, and none dealt with the problems of urbanization.

So, the crisis points in our country arise first and foremost in the arena of consciousness. We have no national system of education. We have no universal primary education between the ages of 6-14. The history of all societies — take Japan after Meiji restoration (1868 Meiji restoration), within 10 years they abolished illiteracy. You may not have the framework of what is provided in Russia, but whatever the framework, the first priority articulated by a very great man called Lunancharsky and a man called Makarenko was education. Here it is not conceptually regarded as a primary input in development. So, the crisis is manifold and multifold. The vision, was as laid down in the Directive Principles, was in a sense, a reflection of Nehru's own vision no doubt. But Nehru's own vision, was articulated in 1936, when he passionately said that the vast problems of multitudes of India, misery and poverty, cannot be resolved except through socialism and by that he said scientific socialism. And reflection of that in the Directive Principles is that there should be a society inspired by equality, inspired by social justice, inspired by the fact that there will not be great differences between the rich and the poor. There will be no concentration of wealth and power.

That vision is still valid according to me but that vision also mocks at us. Nehru thought that this could be realized gradually in an evolutionary way through a device of the state, through the planning system entering the field of economic development, setting up public sector enterprises and those in time would assume commanding heights. At least one can say that for the first 10 or 15 years of our independence there was some vision, some reflection of that vision in terms of what was called the general ethos of the society as that time. There was reason, there was a measure of accurate perception of the world, in which, Nehru had a very acute perception of the world as it is, and that is why his foreign policy is probably a lasting contribution, to which one can pay a tribute.

At home the political instrumentality began decaying and was

not renewed. The limits were reached very soon because, while on the one hand we had a vision of self-reliance, from 1962 onwards, this vision and the imperatives of this vision were not translated into policies — they were only verbalized. In India, in the meantime, even some distinguished economists heard the siren songs of the World Bank or Monetary Funds and I even heard lectures that the path for development lies through export-led strategy of growth. Because even in the middle of the Second Five Year Plan, we ran up against the foreign exchange prices. And they said the first [task] is to earn foreign exchange, and foreign exchange you can earn if you set up your industry and structure design to sell your wares abroad. In those days Brazil was cited as an example; Mexico was cited as an example. Later on their tiny editions were added Taiwan, Korea and Singapore.

Let us look at the end result of the export-led strategy of growth. Brazil — snuffing out, of course, of democracy, fantastic state of indebtedness, high state of inflation. These are common to Mexico, Brazil, Peru, and Columbia. What have you at the end? Authoritarian systems. Whatever is it (that makes) this South Korea a great example. Everyone knows that 68 per cent of the production set-up in Korea is Japanese. So, if you want to open yourself up, as Ashok Mehta once said “the womb of *Bharatmata* should be opened up for foreign investment;” if that be your philosophy, then give up the idea of nationhood and pride. It is quite easy to live a life of comfort if you once decide to give yourself up. If India is to make good, sustain itself with pride, in my view, we must now get away from this idea of export-led road and look internally, within ourselves, to our natural endowments, to the skills that we have created all these years and to set ourselves a target: first of all, human beings must be fed. In fact there is a very lively exchange between Gurudev and Mahatma Gandhi in which Mahatma Gandhi said, “I cannot, in all conscience, as a man who is starved to appreciate the *dohas* of Kabir”. Let our culture-vultures contemplate that things; that mass poverty and even more sense of inequality and deprivation are destabilizing factors of any society and more so of Indian Society. We had a good idea, that is called growth in stability and that itself was related to growth of social justice because we are living in an age, as I submitted — I began by saying yesterday and repeated today — we are living in a new age, where social, economic, political, cultural structures, which are not in consonance with aspirations, aroused by political processes, in millions upon millions of people, you cannot have a stable political, social, economic structure. And such a structure cannot be built in a continental sized country like India, not a city state like Singapore or small territory

like Tai Pe — in fact in India we have islands of prosperity far superior to what cities like Singapore can possess. You go to Delhi and go nowhere except to Aurangzeb Road, Akbar Road, Sultan Nagar or Shantiniketan, Vasant Vihar you have larger houses than in Singapore and people living in equal affluence.

I must, at this stage, warn against a new theory being concocted that the salvation of India lies not in this jungle of government control. I do not, I am not saying this control, that I have myself subscribed to, this control system, but this jungle can be dismantled quite easily and can be rationalized quite easily too. Reagan, he came to power by saying: "Put the government off the backs of the people." Today every American is saying to Reagan what the hell are you doing to rescue me from the market forces? Wall Street is shivering, shaking and the cry goes from the *Time* magazine. What the hell is Reagan doing, why does not he rescue us from this? There is a lack of shame on the part of those economists who, on the one hand swear by the divine consumer sovereignty and the divinity of the market forces to solve efficiently the above problems, and then turn around and say, where there is a crisis in the market forces, operating as they do, the government should compensate. This double talk is there. In India this double talk is dangerous, because it is argued that we have created, in the last 40 years, which is true, a market of about 80 to 100 million people. They say 10 per cent of the 800 million people are the effective market for air-conditioners, refrigerators, cosmetics, all the things you see advertised in TV. If you cultivate, follow the logic of this market, expand it over a period of time, then the wealth so produced will trickle down and remove poverty.

I challenge any set of economist in India to prove that social and political stability can be guaranteed for, let us say the next 30 years, within this framework and that poverty and not poverty measured in calories — I say it is the most false perception, what one ought to measure is not 2,400 calories, that is interesting in some ways, but what one ought to measure in terms of dynamics of human aspirations is the sense of alienation and sense of deprivation. Can be removed? I may feel equally deprived, although I may be above the poverty line, if I do not have a small refrigerator, a small TV set. That is another difference in our society, creating demands, heightening expectations without the necessary means at all (to fulfill them) and in the end giving up self-reliance in the name of export.

So the story of course is very long; but I have to submit that time has come for us, not in a denunciatory way — I do not believe in



denunciation [to think afresh]. To whatever persuasion you might belong — if you call yourself a Marxist (I am conscious of the fact that I am speaking in Calcutta) the obligation on you to think is even more than on those who do not desire or promise basic social transformations. And such a thinking is not consistent with what is called anti-intellectualism, which is a dominant feature of most political contemporary cultures. Despite the fact that we now know the effect of what is called anti-intellectualism and what is called pragmatism, is devastation. Chang Ching devastated China, whereas two of my friends, who were life-long devotees of the cause of the Chinese Revolution, were banished in the name of the people; mind you in the name of the people, during the cultural revolution. China has now suffered 20 years' setback which they are trying to make up by some device or the other. Stalinist Russia committed the same mistake. The Russian revolution opened with a tremendous flowering of intellectual cultural life. One has only to remember Sholokov, one has to remember Eisenstein, one has to remember Maxim Gorky, one has to remember Lunachavsky, thus flowering. Suddenly, in between, under conditions of a siege mentality, this was extinguished. This great socialist experiment, which has at least achieved that everybody has food, everybody has clothing, everybody's health is looked after, everybody has education, everybody is transported. And yet, the Soviet Society, as it had grown in these years, (collapsed) due to some external circumstances, but also due to culturally false perceptions of what is called dynamics of a vision of a humane and humanistic society.

I shall not take your time, I think I have taken enough. One could probably go on. I know I have not done justice to the broad theme which I set up to cover. This would require not one or two lectures. It can require days of debate. After all these seminars are being held all over India.

There is one other thing I would like to add to Nehru's perception — the correctness of his perception of the critical role of Science and Technology and in some areas very dramatic successes, of which we could be nationally proud — in the area of atomic energy, in the area of space, in some areas producing tractors of our own and so on. It was not realized that the technology choices had to be made with great discrimination. During the period when we were governed by import substitution strategy, this was not done as the Japanese do in their organization called Miti (sic). But there is another set of problems and I cannot deal with it — how the CSIR system was created, what its problems of conceptions were and where it has gone wrong; how other organizations were created and how the university system was, not



consciously but in effect unconsciously, sabotaged by growing outside the university system certain centres of excellence and the university system was thereby being starved and no distinction being drawn between what are called direct education from 6 to 14 and 6 to 18 and the concept of university being a base of excellence.

So, dear friends, these problems are coming up, if we are still concerned with the process of nation building, which in its turn has its necessary counterpart in social transformation, economic transformation, educational transformation, cultural transformation. It is an inevitable law that if you do not provide for change, continuity overwhelms you. Someone said that political parties founded on a promise of change are like a person riding a bicycle — it cannot remain stationary for too long.

And so, since this is Calcutta, since I can hear echoes here of ancient times, I can only end up these two sets of lectures devoted to the memory of obviously a very creative person, a physicist, a mathematician, that time has come for us — we, who are committed to a vision of society of a new India — to examine the validity of various assumptions we made in the past in the nation-building and development processes.

Thank you very much.

## NATION BUILDING AND SECULARISM

I am not insensitive to the honour you have done to me by inviting me to deliver a lecture dedicated to the memory of the late Shri Harish Chandra Mathur. Ever since I received the invitation, I have been asking myself what theme I must choose to speak on, which might be appropriate for the occasion. My difficulty has been that I did not have the privilege of really knowing Shri Harish Chandra Mathur. During the years 1948-1955, I was away in London, serving in our High Commission there. During these years, I had the pleasure of meeting Shri Mathur on two occasions in London. Krishna Menon, who was then our High Commissioner, had asked me to look after the visiting Members of Parliament. Shri Mathur was one of them. What initially brought me nearer to him was his rather refreshing indifference to shopping which used to attract most of our visiting dignitaries. On getting to know him a little better, I learnt that he was not a politician in the normal accepted sense of the term. He seemed to be deeply interested in problems of administration and I also came to know of his constructive involvement in the process known as integration of the Indian States into the Union of India. He played a notable part in respect of integration of the Princely States in Rajasthan. Recalling all these bits and pieces of the impression left on my mind by Shri Harish Chandra Mathur, I felt that it might be appropriate to investigate and to review the great variety of problems which we Indians have been facing in the process of nation building. While this theme is, I believe, relevant to the memory of the late Shri Harish Chandra Mathur, I must confess at the very outset that the problem is immensely complex and I can hardly touch upon all its wide and varied aspects in the course of one lecture. Howsoever inadequate might be the effort I make this evening, it is my deep conviction that the effort needs to be made now to understand what really is involved in the process of nation building in India and to critically review the experiences we have had since we attained the status of a sovereign independent state of India as a member of the comity of nations.

We are all citizens of India or Bharat and are, legally, nationals of India. We are also citizens of the Republic of India which is a Federal State. We have also a Constitution which not only defines the rights and obligations of an Indian citizen, but also lays down the Directive Principles which must govern the evolution of India's polity, society, economy and value systems. Someone might argue that since the question of nationality is defined, and since the rights and obligations of

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Text of Harish Chandra Mathur Memorial Lecture.

the citizen are spelt out, the edifice of a modern India is complete, magnificent and durables. Why then discuss the problem of nation building when there is really not any? To those of us who think in such static moulds of thought, I can only say that we really wish to come to grips with the real and not an imaginary world; such moulds of thought must be jettisoned at once. I would not wish to be misunderstood as pretending to be in possession of knowledge which others do not have. We all have the knowledge and awareness and even have disturbing thoughts, but we would rather not face them lest we lose our inner tranquility. This is not unique to us Indians.[...]

We, in India, must make a conscious effort here and now to overcome the inertia in our thinking and thus abjure philistinism as a deadly disease. I say this with some sense of urgency. An average citizen of our country, burdened with poverty and misery of daily life may have enough justification to say that the time and energy spent in search of the next meal or even the first morsel prevents him or her from thinking about nation building and its complexities. Such a justification, however, cannot be pleaded by our country's intelligentsia and more specially by those who have been the beneficiaries of development processes since our independence. Our politicians too, as a class, have a very special responsibility to think rather than continue their joyride on the political merry-go-round. For all these categories of people, there is no excuse whatsoever for abjuring thought and treating it as an eczema. Indeed, if they are mindful of their own narrow interests and that of their children and wish to ensure a future in conditions of peace and social stability, the need for understanding the process of nation building is even more important and urgent for them. Social and political upheavals are more painful to men and women possessing power as well as pelf than to those who have neither.

The first thing to understand and to realize is that nation building, unlike building a house, is a continuing and continuous process. In the history of nations, this process cannot be contained between two ritual occasions, namely, the laying of a foundation stone (*shila-annayas*) and the opening ceremony (*udghatan*). I apologize for appearing to be didactic. That, at any rate, is not my intention. But I, having lived on this earth since 1913 and having accumulated a good deal of experience, have discovered that men and women, more specially those who call themselves educated, who have no understanding or even the feeling for the processes of history, often come to grief. Their search for solution of problems, without asking themselves how the problem arose and evolved, often leads to creation of more problems which then assume menacing dimensions. Faced with this, the tendency is to blame others

for our failures or resign ourselves to Fate or God. That was probably the one reason why Jawaharlal Nehru was so obsessively concerned with discovering India, lecturing on the theme of continuity and change and talking about "the inwardness of the process of history".

When faced with social and natural phenomena, we human beings at the primitive stages of our evolution could only ask: Who has done it? And the answer invariably was God or Devil, or a tribal chief or a King. And all the images of God were Pantheistic, very often associated with natural phenomena. There were, simultaneously, beliefs which are covered under the word Animism. It is only after a long period of trial and error and through processes of observing, analyzing and understanding the behaviour of Nature and Society that we human beings made first, second, third or closer approximation to knowledge. Basing ourselves on that knowledge, we began gradually to understand and to overcome the problems created for us by Nature and Society. This process of gaining knowledge and then applying it is called the process of secularization of the human mind. It is a continuous and ongoing process because there is no definable limit to knowledge. However, the process of secularization leads to religion occupying its own domain regulating the relationship between human beings and the divine. In this view of the matter, Creation and Evolution need not be posed as antagonistic but as inter-related as Chance and Necessity. The process of secularization also leads to the demarcation of the domain of temporal power and spiritual power and to the separation of State from religion.

I find that I have somewhat diverted your attention from the theme of nation building to the theme of historical process including the process of secularization. It was necessary for me to do so because, in our country, there has been a signal failure to discuss, debate and to understand the meaning of secularism which has been so cheerfully enshrined in the very Preamble to our Constitution. We all assure ourselves that we are a Secular State. The more we do so, the more we obstruct even to the point of destruction, the secularization process in our country. Indeed, in recent years, one hears with greater frequency the assertion that of all the errors committed by the founding fathers of our Constitution, the most grievous and tragic has been the attempt to make India a Secular State. It is now being argued with increasing intensity of passion that all our ills stem from this "allegedly imported concept of secularism", and that the time has come for us to face the fact that more than 82 per cent of Indians are Hindus and that we should declare our State to be a Hindu State, and that we should go back to the *Vedas*, *Puranas* and *Shastras* and actively engage in exorcising the



haunting spectre of intrusion of Islam and of Christianity into the sacred earth of India. The argument is that Islam and Christianity are of foreign origin. Only Hinduism is indigenous. It is therefore patriotic to get rid of the foreigners or to reduce them, at any rate, to a position of subservience to the Hindu majority. It is even argued that our Constitution which seeks to protect the minority rights is a monstrous thing and reduces the Hindu majority to a state of defencelessness. Hence, the movement dedicated to *Hindu sangathan* in a variety of forms and organizations. One finds similar attempts made to unite together followers of Islam, Christianity and of course Sikhism. It does not require any great imagination to see that if India were to become an arena of contending groups organized in the name of religion, we shall have endless conflicts and the process of nation building will come to a grinding halt. Indeed, the sanguinary conflicts in Punjab, Gujarat, in the city of Bombay itself and tensions in our entire Northeast, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala as well as in Kashmir are painful reminders of the harsh reality that the process of nation building in India has come up against some very intractable problems.

I might at this stage add that the formation of the peoples of India through several thousand years of our history is a product of migration of peoples of a great many ethnic variety and that it is ridiculous as it is tragic to deal with the process of formation of the great variety of our people by simply categorizing them into "indigenous" and "foreigners". The concept of purity of race and culture can only be advocated by the ideologues of extremely reactionary forces. And if they were to succeed in India, as they did in Hitler's Germany, there will not only be total destruction of India's democracy, but destruction of India itself. What causes me particular amusement against the puritanism of those who rail against foreigners is the avidity with which they consume things foreign including large chunks of foreign money. But when irrationality takes over the human mind, all contradictions are reconciled within the paradigm of the irrational. The way is then cleared for a society becoming beleaguered and besieged within itself to an extent to cause its decay and even destruction. That is why we cannot speak in the memory of Harish Chandra Mathur within the framework of irrationality and unreason. We must try to rescue reason and apply it to known and verifiable facts of historical experience.

"History", "historicity", "historical process" are all so many words. We have also heard of denunciation of history as pure bunk; that it does not repeat itself and that it teaches nothing. We have also the familiar mould of thought that human destiny is determined by God's Will

and by the constellation of stars. Indeed, it is a well established fact that a very large number of persons in our country tenaciously adhere to the belief which wholly negates any role to the human consciousness generated by available and verifiable knowledge. In large parts of our country, more specially in our rural areas, fatalism embodied in folk sayings and reinforced by the centuries old iniquitous social structure has left human minds savagely imprisoned. Being an ancient society, with a long and continuous tradition, dead habits of thought persists. That is why, perhaps, the great reformers and thinkers have endeavoured from time to time to challenge those elements in our tradition which keep our minds in chain. Prince Siddharth challenged the deadening effect of Brahmanical ritualism. That was several thousand years ago. In more recent years, we hear the clear and resonant voice of Tagore. With tremendous passion, he dreams of a new India. It is high time that we recalled his words not by way of performing a ritual, but as an act of restoration of a lost vision of our country. Let us read, re-read, feel and think over every line of his famous poem:

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;  
Where knowledge is free;  
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by  
narrow domestic walls;  
Where words come out from the depth of truth;  
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;  
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the  
dreary desert sand of dead habit;  
Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening  
thought and action;  
Into that heaven of freedom,  
My Father, let my country awake.

Even Tagore's lines raise a question: What really happened to our country that it became necessary for Tagore to write what he did? At once, one comes up with a historical question: What then is history? This question has been debated and discussed by historiographers. Edward Hallett Carr has provided an answer to that question in his little book titled *What is history?* He states that history answers the question as to how things happened the way they did. He also argues, with profound insight, that the groundwork of history is provided by the interaction of tensions between factors of continuity and factors of change. In this view of the matter, there would have been no history if there had been no change.

There would have been neither biological evolution nor social evolution nor, indeed, growth of science and technology and their impact on our lives. History thus invites us to challenge the concept of immutability and a thought structure frozen in transcendentalism.

It is truly tragic to see large sections of our country's intelligentsia still thinking in categories totally purged of historical consciousness. The system of education that Macaulay introduced and which is still prevailing in our society has reinforced such ways of thought by overemphasis on learning by rote and reproducing, what is learnt, in the examination system. This has made us mere carriers of western thoughts entirely divorced from its context. We then become rather like a mosquito carrying Malaria. And the most dangerous and yet seductive western thought which has come to us from pathetically alienated intellectuals of the West is that Indian mysticism combined with Chinese traditional thought embodied in Taoism anticipated and confirms the results of modern science. And we fall for this sort of flattery and thus shy away from facing the rather complex set of problems which history has posed for our country.

When confronted with a problem or with a situation, history enjoins upon us to ask ourselves how did the problem or the situation arise? I passionately believe that unless our entire educational system, beginning with the education of our children, stimulates in us the sense of curiosity which history demands, we shall never succeed in either understanding the vast variety of problems which bedevil our country nor shall we succeed in finding a reasonably correct approach to the solving of such problems. Either we do this or we idly sit by helplessly watching the unfolding of God or the devil's design. Only an understanding of the process of historical evolution can provide the antidote to all those pernicious ideologies which conjure up a glorious past, be it Hindu, Islamic or Sikh or Christian. We then exert to restore that past. It is as ridiculous and tragic as someone asking us all to satisfy our today's physical and spiritual hunger by recalling the richness of the meal we took in the past. The story of dead civilizations and of beliefs of one's mighty great empires is the story of sheer incapacity for such Civilizations and Empires to face up the problems of the future by being anaesthetized by the past. The revolution taking place in our own life-time in Science and Technology will compel us to change our ways of thought. Either we do this or we perish.

Neither the *Vedas*, nor the *Shastras*, nor the *Puranas*, nor the *Quran* nor the teachings of the great Gurus, nor the holy *Bible* can save us from going down once again in our history. All this calls for

secularization of the Indian mind, promoting the spirit of enquiry and of scientific temper, developing a passion for science, both of Society and of Nature. This does not mean a denial to religion its true role in providing answers to those questions and those human needs which are outside and beyond the universe of political, economic and social realities we must cope with, with the help of knowledge derived from social and natural sciences. It also calls for rescuing religion from vulgarity of debased ritualism and of priesthood who earn their living in the name of Christ, Mohammad, the Gurus and the inspirers of the *Vedas*.

The only true religion for our times, indeed, for all times to come, is the religion which attaches sacredness to human life and places at the centre of our concern love and not hate. If there is divine dispensation then such a dispensation is only consistent with love. In the name of revealed religious truth, human beings have killed one another. Only religions inspired by love of humanity and compassion can be called a religion in any true sense of the term which inspired Buddha or Christ or Mohammad or Guru Nanak or those who raised questions about human destiny and of the relationship between *Atman* and *Brahman* in the *Vedas* and the *Upanishad*. In a nuclear age, the only hope of salvation lies through a restatement of the dream about turning this Earth into one single family united by compassion, love, tolerance and co-operation. Either we consistently fight for a religion deeply inspired by humanism or religious revivalism and fundamentalism take possession of us all. Historical experience has shown that religious revivalism and fundamentalism have bred hatred and intolerance and are destructive of democracy.



## SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF ECONOMIC GROWTH

In discussing the sociological aspects of economic growth, I think the key word is “growth”. Once we are clear about the meaning of “growth” we can tailor our strategies to suit our particular development needs.

I am no economist. I am an administrator who has to formulate and execute policies having a bearing on growth. But it appears to me that models of growth so assiduously built up by the economists all over the world — though intellectually highly consistent — have failed to foresee and prescribe remedies for the social and political problems which are an inevitable accompaniment of a growth process. The dangerous part is that these abstract models are too often used for policy purposes in national planning schemes in most of our countries.

One could roughly put the development theorists into two categories: you have, on the one hand, the advocates of “balanced growth”, a sort of simultaneous multiple development in all sectors. This strategy would ensure movement of the economy on all fronts.

Another group of influential economists pleads for “unbalanced growth”. These economists would have us concentrate on initiating development in a leading sector of the economy and depend on this sector to spread the growth impulse till the whole economy is engulfed. Under this strategy, a key sector selected for concentration of attention becomes a trail blazer for the rest of the economy.

Recently, a highly distinguished Swedish economist, Gunnar Myrdal, after a marathon research spread over a decade, sums up his conclusions in three large volumes running into 2,500 pages. He has discovered, two decades of theory building notwithstanding, that both kinds of theories, those bearing on “balanced” and “unbalanced growth” are irrelevant to the problems of developing countries. To him the institutional factors like the social, political, cultural and psychological variables are even more crucial compared to economic variables like inputs, outputs, incomes and levels of living for effecting transition from under-development to development in emerging societies.

There are as many theories of growth as there are the number of economists. This is hardly surprising. Perhaps that is why some practical men find economics an *inexact science*.

A common yardstick of progress accepted by economists is an increase in annual national income. As long as national incomes of

developing countries achieve a six per cent growth rate as targeted for the Second Development Decade, this is enough evidence of movement. This really amounts to confusing mere *growth* with economic development. Development is *the movement of a whole social system upwards*. It has been our experience that increases in national income even if they are faster than the rate of population growth, do not automatically solve social, political or even economic problems. In fact, a faster growth of national income sometimes creates these problems.

It would not have worried us if the models had continued to be debated among the economists. Problems have arisen because development plans in most developing countries have been based on these single dimensional models. Reactions to the programmes of planned development of developing countries have, of course, differed. In the over-optimistic fifties, it was believed both in developing and developed countries that a simple straight forward strategy based on increased investment and a heavy dose of foreign assistance accompanied by a modest package of institutional reforms would help achieve an economic breakthrough. All that these countries had to do was somehow to achieve a saving and investment rate of 15 per cent. This, in turn, was expected to lift these economies from stagnation and launch them into self-sustaining growth.

With the sixties, there was a swing to disappointment both in donor and developing countries. It was discovered that two or three five-year-plans are not sufficient to solve the tough social and political problems some of which are created or accentuated in the process of growth. Disappointment was due to a variety of problems such as widening social and economic inequalities, rising rate of unemployment and under-employment, very high population growth, drift of the rural poor to the cities and an inadequate industrial structure for absorption of surplus labour. In other words, what the sixties did was to bring to the fore the equity aspects of growth with a sharpness that has come as a surprise to planners and policy-makers. The vast masses of people inhabiting developing countries who were fed on "the revolution of rising expectations" in the fifties are showing signs of dissatisfaction with widening social and economic inequalities and rising unemployment and under-employment, in particular. The reaction of the vast mass of under-privileged people will grow in severity unless correctives are applied to arrest the deteriorating situation.

And this brings me to the so-called conflict between economic growth and social justice, which, in my view, has been unnecessarily played up by some economists.

There may be some little conflict between the two, if one takes a time span of three to five years. However, in planning for development, one should have a telescopic vision. One should think in terms of a time span of 20 to 25 years. Within a time span of 20 to 25 years, I venture to suggest, there is no conflict, between economic growth and social justice.

The compatibility of social justice with economic growth over a period of time can be easily established, if we spell out the essential elements of social justice. The most crucial ingredient of social justice in any developing society, to my mind, should be a national basic minimum. This national minimum should include not only economic but also social well-being. In concrete terms, every individual living in a developing country should be guaranteed not only a minimum of food, clothing, shelter, health and education but also freedom from discrimination emanating from caste, creed, colour or birth. Ideally, the social basic minimum should also include the right to employment and a living wage.

The second important ingredient of social justice includes the prevention of undue concentration of economic power in a few hands to ensure a reasonable measure of equality between different sections of the community. Concentration of economic power in a few hands must be prevented at all costs, especially if it arises out of unequal opportunities or unequal social, political and economic circumstances. This alone will help bring about, a reduction in the wide gulf between the very rich and the very poor sections of society. The argument is sometimes advanced that reduction in the share of the richer classes in the national dividend would act as a disincentive to production efforts. I do not agree with this view at all. The elimination of "functionless incomes" would help the society in every way. A ruthless attack on black money, for example, will accelerate not only economic progress but would also promote the ends of social justice.

Some economists have been of the view that a basic economic minimum and a high rate of saving do not go together. Yet other groups of economists believe that a high rate of saving is contingent upon unequal income distribution. However, some recent studies have shown that investment in food, health, housing and education increases the productivity of the working population over a period of time. And increased productivity, it need hardly be emphasized, does necessarily result in higher savings.

Again in societies, where the vast mass of human beings are unemployed and under-employed, the possibility of any conflict between



saving and social justice is easily ruled out. It is common knowledge that millions of people in developing countries are unemployed and under-employed. Economic inequalities are not confined to different classes of income earners. Such inequalities exist even more glaringly as between the employed and the unemployed. Thus any steps by way of creation of fresh employment opportunities designed to ensure fuller utilization of under-utilized manpower resources will go a long way not only in achieving social justice but also in accelerating economic progress. I would, therefore, advocate that the objective of a basic social minimum should be accorded the highest priority in the interests of speedier economic growth in developing countries.

Since there is no conflict between social justice and economic growth in the sense in which we have defined it, it is better to judge a developing country's pace of progress by the degree of success achieved in providing a minimum access to the basic necessities of life like food, clothing, shelter, health and education, reduction in economic and social inequalities including those arising from discrimination due to caste, creed or birth, and the reduction in unemployment and under-employment. Had these criteria been chosen for judging a country's development, some of the mistakes made in framing plans of development for developing countries could have been avoided. Judging a country's development, by whether she has or has not succeeded in achieving the targeted annual growth rates does not give any idea of the impact made on the real problems enumerated above. In fact, I would go a step further and say that this mechanical method of judging a country's economic development has led to an aggravation of some of the equity problems which are beginning to hit all developing countries in the face.

I shall illustrate the pitfalls a country runs into by adopting the mechanical growth rate approach with reference to the Indian experience with which I am most intimately familiar. We have discovered, to our very great discomfiture, that the moderate annual growth rates recorded during the 23 years after independence, have failed to solve the tough social and political problems. I am not suggesting that there has been no economic progress at all during this period. The evidence of economic growth is unmistakable. There is tremendous physical achievement by way of newly created dams, plants and national institutions. The country has developed an industrial infrastructure of which all Indians can be reasonably proud. A wide industrial base has been laid down. What is more, the country has already witnessed the beginnings of a technological breakthrough in



agriculture. Above all, the community development movement has embraced large parts of the country.

The irony of the situation, however, is that the very success achieved in solving the problems of agricultural and industrial production has created a whole host of social and political problems which had not been correctly anticipated. For one thing, as a result of two decades of development, the rich have become richer and the poor poorer. The inequalities have been widened both in respect of different sections of society and the various States of the Indian Union. This increase in inequalities can be easily illustrated with reference to the impact of the 'Green Revolution' on different classes of rural society.

The adoption of the selective agricultural strategy which has paid off rich dividends by way of increased output of foodgrains and which, in turn, has been reflected in a higher national income and, therefore, higher growth rates, has created social tensions in the rural areas. The so-called "Green Revolution" is limited to certain regions, crops and a category of farmers. For one thing, the green revolution is confined to the irrigated acreage. It has not, therefore, made any impact in the overwhelmingly large dry farming areas. An estimate, for example, puts the rural population at 434 million in 1969. Out of this total rural population, 103 million own no land at all. Another 185 own less than five acres. These two large segments representing 67 per cent of the total rural population have not benefited from the new agricultural strategy at all. This is because the credit structure in the Indian villages is heavily weighted in favour of the large farmers.

The small farmer, therefore, is not in a position to take advantage of the new technology, since he does not have the wherewithal to purchase fertilizers and high yielding variety of seeds. Nor does he have the resources to dig a well. The tenants and landless labourers are not better off either. In our obsession with self-sufficiency in foodgrains, we have neglected the social imperatives. Unless steps are taken soon enough to fulfil the unsatisfied demand for new inputs, on the part of a vast majority of the small farmers in India, it may become difficult to contain an explosion. As a result of the demonstration effect created by improved living standards among the rich farmers, the desire for better living among the vast masses of the rural population cannot be suppressed any longer. The rural tensions are showing in several states. Forcible occupation of land, harvesting of standing crops and violent attempts to secure better wages represent danger signals. The solution of the problem of rural inequities, which have been created directly as a result of selective economic growth, brooks no delay. Nothing can stop

the explosion of expectations in the rural areas. These expectations are irreversible as the green revolution itself.

The problem of dissatisfaction with the widening social and economic inequalities is not limited to rural areas. The politically conscious and mentally alert city dwellers are protesting even more vigorously against these inequities. The protest, has taken the shape of a demand for a ceiling on urban incomes. Fiscal measures have not succeeded in reducing the inequalities between different sections of urban society. Money incomes generated by development expenditure have certainly enlarged opportunities for the entrepreneurial class. However, this has also had the effect of making inequalities in income distribution worse. Again, growth of industry has also had the inevitable effect of creating housing shortage and slums in cities.

What should the developing countries do now? Most of them already have experience of 15 to 20 years of planned development. The past cannot be recreated. Only drastic and economic reforms above all in land could help contain the revolution of rising dissatisfaction. And this brings me to the political problem. How can drastic institutional reforms be introduced by governments which, with the exception of Communist China, are represented by the elite groups who have begun to share the benefits flowing from the limited economic modernization that has already been achieved. I leave this as an open question for all of you to ponder.

The Indian example again comes to mind. I believe the state governments may not pay much attention to correcting rural iniquities which are becoming too glaring to miss notice. I am saying this on the basis of past performance of state governments. These governments find themselves helpless in applying the correctives since state legislatures are dominated by powerful lobbies controlled by the rich farmers. However, unless something is quickly done to reduce the gap between benefits to large and small farmers, we are in for a period of rural unrest. "Every bad story has a moral. Every good story is a moral," said Chesterton. If our economists and planners had not been obsessed with mechanical annual growth rates, social reforms and the new agricultural technology should have gone hand in hand. And today the problems would have been much less complex both for the country and the economists.

## BEYOND THE SHIBBOLETHS

I am grateful to the Director of the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, Dr C S Jha, for the kind things he has said about me. However, I should like to correct the impression which he might have created by referring to my long association with the Planning Commission. I joined the Planning Commission as its Deputy Chairman on 4 January 1975 and I submitted my resignation on 24 March 1977. A period of little more than two years cannot be described as a long association.

I am not saying this to absolve myself from being answerable for whatever I might have done or failed to do. I am proud of my association with the Planning Commission. Men of great dedication and ability have worked in it. The Planning Commission has within it many distinguished economists, statisticians and others possessing highly sophisticated technical skills. Any country would be proud of them. And I feel a sense of pride in being part of that system and that organization.

When I joined the Planning Commission, I did make the observation that I was perhaps the latest “sacrificial goat” to enter its precincts. I said this because it is part of our national habit to blame, the Planning Commission for our collective national failures — both of the politicians and of our intelligentsia. In this sense, the Planning Commission appears to perform a useful function. But I would not want that to become the sole reason for its continuance as a sort of vestigial remnant.

We have had recently a vast political upheaval in our country. Pent up feelings and emotions of our people expressing themselves through the ballot box have caused eruption of a volcanic kind. And accompanying such eruption which was not unexpected, a lot of gas and grit is being thrown up. All this is understandable.

After 30 years of Independence, a very large segment of our people are not assured even of two square meals a day. They are not able to find work through which alone man acquires human dignity and is able to earn his bread. The minds and hearts of our people are famished because they lack education. Anyone contemplating this scene of poverty, degradation, cultural backwardness cannot but feel a sense of profound shame.

However, public honesty demands that we understand clearly

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Convocation address at the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur on 9 April 1977  
*Mainstream*, 2 July 1977.



that solutions are not going to be easy. And certainly we are not going to find them by merely using some magical words like “employment-oriented strategy of growth”, “back to the rural areas” or “decentralized planning” or “more investment in agriculture as against industry”, etc., etc. All these ideas have been bandied about for years and do not even have the shine of a new idea.

The International Labour Organization has produced a vast amount of literature on the “Employment-Oriented Strategy of Growth” which is gathering dust. I myself have talked a great deal about disaggregated or micro-level planning down to the district and, ultimately, to the village level only to discover that this very necessary and desirable way of touching and changing the life of millions of our people in the villages of India becomes a nightmare without the necessary political infrastructure sustaining the idea of decentralized planning.

Indeed, in the finalized version of the Fifth Five Year Plan, there is a clear enunciation of the perspective within which we should plan in the future. Chapter II of that document begins with “The Perspective” in following terms:

The objectives in view are removal of poverty and achievement of self-reliance. This chapter seeks to delineate a desirable profile of development, indicating magnitudes which will help to determine options for long-term investment and outlining strategies which will help to overcome the constraints in achieving the objectives. The strategies relate to growth in the three leading sectors, namely, agriculture, energy and critical intermediates and the creation of additional employment opportunities.

Even in the current Five Year Plan, there are series of programmes relating to small and marginal farmers, tribal people and drought prone areas. All these are attempts at striking at the roots of poverty. The concepts and approaches are sound. What we lack is the political will to implement and the means and mechanisms for implementing them.

In the vast majority of our states, planning systems are primitive. At the meeting of the National Development Council which was held last year, I said it in the presence of all the Chief Ministers that they regarded Planning Boards as a kind of decorative furniture.

The attempts to democratize our life at the village, block, district, town and city levels have singularly failed. Village Panchayats, Zila Parishads do not function. For years no elections have been held. Our



municipalities are mostly superseded and, in our city corporation, men having civic pride do not apparently exist.

Is it then not a cruel joke in these circumstances to talk about decentralized planning? Even in those parts of our country where local self-governing institutions function, such institutions have become repositories of factional intrigues directed towards buttressing the interests of the rich. Our democratic edifice is thus resting on insecure foundations. It can always be subverted with no great effort.

Speaking of the rich and the poor, we as a country are constantly appealing to the conscience of the rich nations by saying that they owed it to us to transfer capital resources and technology. Indeed, some of the most perceptive minds in the affluent part of the world recognize that peace and stability in the world cannot be assured unless the imbalance between the affluent part of it and the destitute part of it is somehow corrected over a period of time.

Lester Pearson presented a report to the World Bank in 1970 titled *Partners in Development*. In that report, he made an impassioned plea in the following words:

No planet can survive half slave, half free; half engulfed in misery, half careering along toward the supposed joys of almost unlimited consumption from unprecedented production with less work; and all in an atmosphere of greater ease and luxury than man has known since the declining days of Rome. Neither our ecology nor our morality could survive such contrasts. And we may have perhaps ten years to begin correcting this imbalance and to do so in time.

Now I want to put a simple question to my countrymen. If we ask the rich countries to help us out of our national poverty, is it not right, decent, proper, moral and dignified that our own rich, be they farmers or industrialists, should appear to make quantifiable sacrifices in the interests of the poor? I have been looking for these gentlemen and I have failed to discover any. Hence, the chronic stagnation of our capital formation.

In the prosperous State of Punjab, the land revenue collected was about four crore rupees and the cost of collecting it was a little more. Our politics turns around spending money. Resource mobilization is regarded as a dirty word. Vast majority of poor are regarded as donkeys before whom carrots have to be dangled. Across the wide spectrum of our political life, economic populism is practised. This must inexorably lead in time to our destruction.

Might I turn to another current slogan about “employment-oriented strategy of growth”? Admittedly, employment generation on a satisfactory scale is at the heart of the problem of modernization of the Indian economy. India is much too poor a country to afford unproductive doles as a method of generating adequate employment. Therefore, employment generation has to be a part and parcel of a policy of investment expansion and output increase. Within the framework of output and investment planning, special effort has to be made to look at the employment aspects through institutional and organizational changes as well.

The growth of industrial employment in the organized sector, in periods in which the rate of industrial growth was between eight and 10 per cent, was higher than four per cent compound per annum. Employment in the modern sector, therefore, essentially depends on increased investment in a non-inflationary manner in the modern sector. The derived expansion of output then leads to the generation of sufficient employment opportunities. Obviously, fiscal and other methods need to be used so that capital is not used in a wasteful manner to replace labour in the modern sector.

However, the real cost of capital has been increased in the Indian economy in the recent period and this should have a salutary effect. Basically, the problem of step-up in the investment rate in non-inflationary manner is critical to the expansion of industrial employment and is an important problem during the medium-term time horizon.

Our past experience shows that the expansion of employment opportunities is intimately linked to the rate of capital accumulation or capital formation in our national economy. Increases in productive employment can be sustained only if there is rapid increase in the stock of the means of production.

Thus, it is not possible to expand productive employment opportunities without expanding complementary supplies of capital inputs; employment expansion is also linked with the structure of domestic demand which decides what products are consumed and produced in the Indian economy. The structure of domestic demand would naturally depend upon income distribution as well as government policies on excise duties and other indirect taxes. If domestic demand is such that it encourages the production of labour-intensive products then, obviously, employment possibilities in such a situation will grow with the growth in national income.

If income distribution pattern is such that the additional incomes generated accrues disproportionately to the upper income groups, then

the products that would experience expansion in the Indian economy would be either consumer durables or other luxuries, and such products tend to be capital-intensive.

What I am arguing is that for increasing employment opportunities it is necessary to have both increase in capital accumulation and domestic consumption with a production structure which is labour-intensive. In addition to the government's contribution towards increasing capital formation in the national economy, the government policies should decisively influence the pattern of domestic consumption and domestic production by taxing capital-intensive products more and encouraging the increased use of labour by penalizing inefficient use of the relatively scarce resources, namely, capital.

In order to think about the problems of employment in our country properly, we must recognize that the employment problems which are related to our rural economy and our industrial economy are conceptually somewhat different. Similarly, the employment problems of highly skilled labour such as graduates in science and technology and of skilled and semi-skilled labour are, again, very different.

One should be aware of these differences; only then can one devise appropriate policies and programmes designed to create adequate employment opportunities in each of these sectors.

As regards the rural sector, agriculture must remain at the heart of the problem of employment creation, although non-agricultural rural activities can also make an important contribution. To begin with, the generation of employment opportunities in the agricultural sector would be sensitive to the rate and the pattern of agricultural growth. Therefore, agricultural output expansion has to be faster than in the past in some of the regions of the country, where the employment problem is particularly acute, such as in the big river-valley delta regions, that is, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal.

This in turn poses some basic problems: we must organize investment on a sufficiently large scale in infrastructure such as irrigation, transport and extension systems. But this is not enough. We must solve problems of institutional change, of land reforms and tenancy reforms and of building support systems for delivery of both economic infrastructure as well as social services to the underprivileged groups of society.

The various projections made show very clearly that unless steps are taken to strengthen and support an efficient cottage-industry

sector, employment opportunities will not be available on a required enough scale. This, by itself, also involves fairly difficult planning choices in terms of decisions on technological alternatives, regulation of powerful organized corporate sectors and organization of support mechanisms for the decentralized sectors.

The whole issue of area and central planning has, therefore, to be resolved within the context of the important choices of development planning. Speeches will not do it. Bright ideas will not do it. We can do it by doing it with tenacious political commitment which alone can bring about a corresponding administrative commitment.

I spoke earlier about the need for institutional changes, namely, land reforms and tenancy reforms, if we are serious about the problem of reviving our agriculture and generating employment in the rural areas. In this context, I should like to emphasize the profoundly erroneous view that the desirable socio-economic changes are simply a function of investment planning. This fallacy is dramatically illustrated by our own experience in the two districts of Bihar, namely, Purnea and Saharsa which are served by the Kosi Eastern Canal and the Rajpur Canal system.

One of our distinguished and dedicated economists, Dr Pradhan H Prasad has written in detail about this. I should like to refer briefly to one rather dramatic feature. The Kosi and Rajpur canal systems were meant to irrigate about 18 lakh acres of land annually. However, to this day, only about four lakh acres of land are actually irrigated. The reasons for this state of affairs lies exclusively in the fact that in Bihar, at any rate, every piece of land legislation has been flouted and the power structure in the State is such that it is inconsistent with the crying need for modernization of agrarian relations in that State.

The Planning Commission had laid bare the problem quite some time ago when it set up a Task Force on Agrarian Relations in March 1973. It might be of interest to recall the conclusions reached by the Task Force. This is what it says:

Since Independence, considerable public investments have been made in irrigation, rural electrification, community development, road building, agricultural extension, etc. The investment in irrigation alone has been of the order of over Rs. 2,000 crores and this investment is estimated to have created an additional irrigation potential of about 10 million hectares. The benefits of these public investments have largely accrued to the bigger landowners who are not required to pay any betterment levy or even reasonable irrigation rates. The benefits of the recent



breakthrough in agricultural production based on the adoption of modern technology have also gone mainly to the well-to-do farmers.

And so, the waters of Kosi and Rajpur canal systems flow away in majestic disdain of the surrounding parched lands. The large investments made in creating the irrigation systems remain unproductive. The sharecropping system, the fragmented land haggard with antiquated agrarian structure makes the investment infructuous.

The question is: Are those who are now vociferously shouting about decentralized planning, employment-oriented strategy, renewal of our agriculture, really serious about the urgent need for agrarian reforms in large parts of our country where sharecropping and semi-feudal bondage persist in 1977? I hope I have given you some little insight into our real problems.

You who have graduated today will be going out of this campus tomorrow into the real world of India. Some of you might even be thinking of migrating to the western world. Those of you who decide to stay in your own motherland would have a better chance of spiritual, moral and intellectual survival if you try and comprehend the Indian reality. Only such a comprehension can be an antidote to a life of frustration often ending in moral suicide.

Kharagpur is in Bengal. And it used to be said that what Bengal thinks today, the rest of India does tomorrow. I share that faith. But remember, the word is "thinking" and not mere vaporous "feeling".

## ANATOMY OF TRANSFORMATION

A desire to collect testimonials is our national malaise. And it is one of the more serious consequences of the long period we have spent under colonial domination. I myself became aware of this when I was a student some 30 odd years ago in the London School of Economics. I was about to complete my studies there.

And so I thought, quite naturally, that I should not leave without getting a testimonial from my professor who was a very distinguished social anthropologist and a great teacher; a chit from Professor Bronislaw Malinowski, I thought, would be quite a thing to have. But when I asked him for it, he was terribly shocked. I could not quite understand why. He enquired why I needed a testimonial. I said that I was returning to India and that in my country everybody produced a testimonial of one sort or another. He said that was quite extraordinary. Students get their degrees and that should be enough. He went on to add that in life one should be judged by one's work even if a person had a good testimonial. I owe a debt of gratitude to Professor Malinowski for saying all this to me which left an indelible impression on my mind.

Professor Malinowski is dead but I thought I should mention his name as an expression of my gratitude to him for making me impervious to certificates of good conduct or indeed, any other kind of testimonial. And if I have survived, it is largely because in all that I have done or failed to do, I have not really cared very much what other people might think about me so long as I have a sort of inner satisfaction that I have not fallen in my own estimation — measured in the scale of values which I cherish. I apologize for being somewhat vulgarly autobiographical, but I felt that I should make articulate my own beliefs, howsoever erroneously held.

It is not for me to prescribe that one should live in light of this or that belief. It is for each one of us to judge how best we should live. I have a horror of giving advice. Convocation Addresses are occasions for giving such advice and one could take good part of an hour doing this. I could exhort you to be truthful, to be good and kind and decent and deserve the degrees and honours that have just been conferred on you. It all comes so easily, but reason why I do not give advice is because it is hazardous to do so.

The giver of advice exposes himself more than he might. The recipients of advice immediately begin to probe into you and look into you

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Convocation Address at PGIMER, Chandigarh in March 1973, reproduced from *Communicator*, October 1973.

rather more deeply than they ordinarily might, and ask whether this fellow, who is giving advice, is living up to it. And since the statistical probability in our country that the one who gives advice is, in fact, not living up to it is very high indeed, I shall not give advice. What then is left for me to speak?

Although the average expectation of life in our country is not very high, as compared to the more advanced countries, I have been struck by the fact that many more people in India go about with intimations of immortality than anywhere. I have no such feeling of being immortal. I may be mistaken, but a human being, who is born one day, is bound to die some day. And in between these two points of man's existence lies life. One can, of course, comfort oneself with the belief that one might be born again. I never argue about a man's faith. However, I have no such conviction that I shall be born again. Death is final and irreversible.

I am quite prepared to contemplate that when I die, my life ends there. What survives are, of course, our children, our deeds or misdeeds, our reputation or lack of it, and that is about all. There is one other thought which is ever present in my mind. You might say that I am displaying a state of morbidity. It might well be. But I always carry with me the picture of the last hours of man's life and the last minutes and seconds. One is then all alone with oneself. At that last moment I should like to feel that I am at peace with myself. I know that I will not be if I am tortured by some regrets or some sense of guilt because of harm I might have done to someone. I do not wish to be haunted by this and I feel strength in travelling through life with the values I cherish as my companions.

I suppose long years of discipline in medicine and surgery have trained your minds to cope with situations both in the surgical theatre and by the bedside of a suffering patient. I suppose you have a commitment to excellence and compassion so that you will do your very best to help ease the suffering of an ailing fellow human being. But there is a wider set of relationships in which we live — wider than the relationship between a doctor or a surgeon and his patient. I might have forgotten about this and not even mentioned it, but as I sat here this morning, I could not help hearing — and I am sure that you too have been hearing — the voices of turbulence outside this very beautiful campus. Even now as I stand, my ears are strained by all the shouting of slogans that is going on there, just outside.

I take it that there are a set of fellow human beings who are demanding something or the other. Up and down the country, there are people demanding something or the other. If you add up the demands, be it for a living wage, higher salaries, motor cars, air-conditioners,

houses, scooters, transistors and cycles, work for the unemployed, not to speak of food, clothing, housing, health and education, and put them against the total national wealth, one is driven to despair because one, instantly, realizes that we just do not have the necessary wherewithal for satisfaction of all these demands, especially when these demands are unconnected with commitment to work, honesty and some measure of austerity and self-denial. One is bewildered by the turbulence of human spirit one comes across. Even though the voices of the meek and the destitute are still muted in our country, those of the “haves” are getting shriller and raucous.

But we cannot despair. We have to understand the “why” and “wherefore” of what is going on around us beyond this campus, beyond the surgical theatre, beyond the narrow discipline to which each one of us might be committed. We are all engaged in some micro-aspect of human activity, but there is the macro-aspect as well the larger world around us. Above all, the world of India.

I have often tried to understand what precisely is happening in our country and to our country. Whither are we going? Are there any discernible laws of motion of our society? What is the bare anatomy of our frustrations? Can we explain all that is happening in terms of some, let us say, general theory of changes taking place in India? I have come to certain conclusions which I should like to place before you. By all means reject them, if you find them wanting. But before you reject them, please examine them carefully. I shall be most grateful for this courtesy.

It seems to me that in our country we are in the midst of three very profound, fundamental and turbulent processes of transformation. These are not unique to our country. Similar things have taken place in other parts of the world at different periods of history. The uniqueness about what is taking place in India is that whereas Europe, for instance, went through it all during a period of three to four centuries, we are in the midst of it in the latter half of the twentieth century. But the social, economic, political, scientific, technological and demographic parameters are different. Also, the time-scale within which the entire transformation must take place is compressed, telescoping several centuries.

Briefly stated, we are in the midst of transforming this very ancient land of ours, with centuries of tradition and civilization, the landmarks of which lie scattered all our country — from the temple of Martand in Kashmir down to extreme South, in the East and in the West. This ancient country of ours, deeply rooted in tradition, bound by certain minutely sub-divided hierarchical social system, suffering from long



period of stagnation, is in the process of change. We are in a twilight period: the past has not vanished and the future has not quite emerged. And so, old ideas, old habits, old thoughts, old value systems and traditions are in constant tussle with new ideas, new values and new social relationships.

When I say “new”, I am merely describing the process of change and not pronouncing a value judgement. By “new” I mean something that is different from the past, something different from the way of life of our ancestors. We feel this difference or sense it in a thousand and one ways. An ancient society is changing into a modern society. I said that this has happened elsewhere too.

Jean Jacques Rousseau, contemplating the period of change in France and in Europe generally, said something to the effect that society tended to progress from being governed by the concept of status to being governed by the concept of contract. We know very well that in our father's, grandfather's and great-grandfather's time — in fact for centuries upon centuries — millions of our people, in lakhs of our villages, lived their life governed by the traditional pattern of society.

A man's life and work was determined by his birth. In hundreds and thousands of villages in our country, man carried on his profession which was given to him by his forefathers and the nature of his profession determined his status. There was no mobility. Here and there individuals might rise above the circumstances of their birth. But social and economic mobility was a statistical improbability. It was, as I said, a society governed by the concept of status which, in turn, was determined by birth in a minutely subdivided hierarchical social system. But now our society is changing, howsoever slowly and painfully.

Man as an individual is painfully emerging. But this emergence of the individual Indian is like the emergence of a baby which is bit of a messy business. Like a baby, the emerging individual human being in our country is surrounded by all kinds of things from the past. When a baby emerges, it has to be severed from its past and the umbilical cord has to be cut, even though it nourished the baby. And so it is with human beings in motion and in the process of change. And we are changing gradually, perhaps imperceptibly, but the change is accompanied by tensions. There is a tension between old habits, old ideas and the imperatives of the emergence of the individual.

What are these imperatives? What is their origin? And this brings me to the second fundamental transformation taking place in our country. It is the transformation of a subsistence, feudal economy into a modern economy with modern industry and agriculture. I am not at

present very much concerned with the framework within which the modernization of the economy, both in its industrial and agricultural sectors, should take place. It could be within the framework of capitalism or socialism or within the framework of what we call a mixed economy with public and private sectors operating at the same time.

One could argue in favour of a thorough-going transformation within the framework of capitalism provided, of course, our capitalists engaging in industrial revolution bring to bear upon the running of industry the culture, the discipline and the virtues of an industrialist rather than that of a money lender and trader. Such virtues are remarkably absent. There is not even a sense of national pride.

However, I do not wish to dwell on this aspect of our contemporary scene today. All that I wish to point out is that the modernization of our industry and agriculture is an extraordinarily difficult task — whatever the framework within which we may desire to work it out. It took nearly three to four centuries in Europe to go through it all with all the blood, toil and tears. In Japan it has taken long years of gestation and development under entirely different conditions.

For our development, we must have resources in manpower, capital, managerial skills and there should be a co-efficient of efficiency between the input of capital and human resources and the output. The attitude to work has to be qualitatively different. The relations between man and machine in an industrial society are complex. And if one looks at all these factors in our country, one discovers that we have a long way to go to acquire the culture necessary for modernization of the economy, both on the part of entrepreneur, be it the state, or the individual or the management and the workers.

If we are to succeed in consummating the industrial and agrarian transformation of India with a fair degree of efficiency, an entirely new individual has to emerge, an individual conscious not only of his rights but also of his obligations. The whole society and values sustaining it have to be restructured. But in our country, there is a large variety of people who are mere parasites eating into our scarce resources contributing nothing to the creation of wealth, creating imbalances in our attempt to distribute our wealth with due regard for social justice and injecting into our political and administrative processes the virus of corruption. If parasitism remains unchecked, if money lenders and traders continue to dominate industry, if management and workers remain solely concerned in protecting their wages and conditions of service in a manner unrelated to production of wealth and the consciousness of the need for socio-economic and political

transformation, the process of modernization of our country will come to a grinding halt.

Since this transformation, both social and economic, is taking place within the framework of democracy, the pace and extent of transformation will vary with the degree of political morality, intelligence, dedication, a sense of ever present urgency and enforcement of a sense of conscious austerity without which there can be neither accumulation of capital resources nor an atmosphere where honest work becomes equated with worship.

The consequences of our country failing to overcome the problems of modernization and industrialization will be that we shall cease to be masters of our own destiny and might become once again a mere chapter in the history of other nations instead of being authors of our own history.

May I finally refer to the third transformation taking place in our country? We are engaged in the transformation of the entity called India, deeply rooted in its traditions with thousands of years of its civilization and culture, into a modern nation-state which is a very recent phenomenon in man's history. A nation-state is not, as it were, a part of nature of things. If you read the genesis of all the religions — Islam, Christianity or Hinduism, you will notice that God created the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, the waters of the oceans, the air and, ultimately, created homo-sapiens.

In no Genesis it is stated that God created the human institutions, political parties, social organizations and nation-states. All these were left to be subject to the laws of growth and decay depending upon man's wisdom or the lack of it. That is why man's past is full of stories of growth, decline and fall of civilizations. And so, a nation-state is a relatively recent creation and is intimately connected with the industrial revolution. Attempts to create nations where citizens could be bound together by ties of common religion failed in Europe. Similarly, states founded on a dynasty did not succeed either.

Germany, Great Britain, Italy and a large number of States in Central and Eastern Europe are all products of recent history. And the most recent attempts to create nation-states in Asia and Africa are the result of the decline of the British, French and Dutch Empires, just as the emergence of new States in Central and Eastern Europe was the result of the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian, Czarist and the Ottoman Empires.

It is not easy to create a modern secular state. In our country, we



say that we are a modern and secular state. This is more an expression of our intent than a statement of our accomplishment.

We cannot have a firm assurance of having laid the durable foundations of a modern nation-state without consummating the modernization both of our economy and of our society. Thus a modern nation-state, modern economy and new society of free individuals hang together, and if they do not hang together, they will hang separately.

Not far away from Chandigarh, there lies a frontier. Across that frontier, a State came into being. It called itself Pakistan. It consisted of parts of Punjab and parts of Bengal, Sind, Baluchistan and the Frontier Province. The founding fathers of this new State thought that these could be held together by a single integrative force of religion. The tragic events of 1971 should be a lesson to all of us. Religion cannot provide the basis for erecting the structure of a modern state. And so, Pakistan fell apart despite commonness of religion, because the state structure failed to take into account the importance of linguistic and cultural diversity and the consequences of economic growth. A modern nation-state in India, with its wide and varying diversity, must of necessity be secular, if it has to survive, grow and evoke the loyalty of millions of our people.

I have endeavoured to outline the basic laws of motion governing the transformation of our country. And if there is any validity in what I have said, then it is quite obvious that while we have to take into account the diversity of our country, we can transmit it into strength only in the measure that the entire social, political and economic thinking deliberately encourages emergence of an Indian, whose primary loyalty is that of a citizen of the country; that we encourage patterns of economic development and attitude to work which maximize production of wealth and simultaneously engage in distributive justice strictly based on growth; and that we discourage in every possible way manifestations of particularism of one sort or another, be it rooted in religion, language, region, caste or even the corrosive effect of money as a nexus between one man and another. Finally, we should ruthlessly eradicate parasitism.

We have a long way to go. Either we take into account the imperatives arising out of the threefold transformation of India or somewhere along the road we shall get lost. What these imperatives are, I do not propose to spell out. Firstly, I do not have the time and secondly, I would rather say that you do it for yourself either as a conscious citizen of India or as a person committed to some political party which seeks to change the entire scheme of things radically or gradually.



## YOUTH AS INSTRUMENT OF CHANGE

Mr Secretary-General, Ministers, your excellencies and distinguished delegates.

It seems to me that someone possessing a macabre sense of humour had led to my presence here this morning. I really have no particular competence to address you this morning. You probably collectively and individually know lots more about Youth, but I suppose the idea was that there should be a confrontation between a statistical reality called Youth and a statistical reality called Age, hoping that something might come out of this confrontation. So far as I am concerned, I recognize that "Youth" is a necessary abstraction in any meaningful social analysis, but we must remember that when we isolate this thing — this group — from society as a whole, we are doing what any botanist does when he takes the leaf out of a tree, but he will be a very bad botanist, a very bad scientist, if he forgot to put the leaf, after examination back to the tree to which it belonged.

You, Mr Secretary-General, said something very significant and important, and I hope that we shall constantly bear that in mind. If I recall correctly your words, you said that in trying to deal with youth, we are in effect dealing with the entire structure of our contemporary society. That is important to remember. Secondly, we should remember that while for purposes of abstraction we deal with "Youth" we are really unravelling the inter-connections in our contemporary societies, their problems, their tensions, their movements, their changes, which are unique in each country. Consequently what needs to be done in respect of Youth would be different in different societies. Unless we bear this in mind, we are likely to come out with mere abstractions which, when applied concretely to the actual problems, will not produce results. We shall be engaged in the sensation of doing something without evoking any response.

Mr Secretary-General, I have been in my time associated in one way or another, largely through my frequent postings in London, with the evolution of our Commonwealth. I think it was a very remarkable achievement for which the statesmen, who met together round about in 1949 and subsequently, were responsible; they were responsible for converting a relationship based on conflict and dominance into a relationship based on co-operation, gradually over a period of years. You, Mr Secretary-General, preside over the Commonwealth Secretariat which, in effect, today is more of a symbol of our common

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Inaugural speech at the first meeting of the Commonwealth Youth Affairs Council at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi on 25 March 1974.

association than almost anything else. I cannot fail to observe that in our contemporary world, organizations tend to evolve a life of their own. I think we have got to be extremely careful about this.

My experience of international organizations extending over a large number of years has been that they tend to have a *raison d'être* in the mere existence of the organization itself, divorced from any meaningful activity in which the organization might engage. The result has been that with the rising costs and inflation, very often, we are faced with the dilemma that when we have sustained ourselves, as it were, we are left with very marginal surplus to engage in any activity which might be meaningful. Now it is terribly important in the world of today that we should be meaningful in whatever we do, and I am glad that the Commonwealth Youth Affairs Council, conceptually at any rate, has realized that probably by setting up regional centres you may be bringing yourself nearer to dealing with some real problems, and I welcome this development, provided of course the cost factors are borne in mind.

Now one of the problems in India, we are to seek to plan our economic development. But one of the baneful consequences of our attempting to do for our citizens purely as a government, as a party or as an Administration is that generally people tend to feel that everything must be brought to them. It stifles voluntary effort, it stifles individual initiative. I hope, Mr Secretary-General, that when you grow into an organization, you will please bear in mind that nothing is more rewarding in the process of transformation in a society than to see human beings involved in voluntary effort; this initiative must not be stifled by over-activity on our part; there has to be a fine judgment in this matter if our resources are to go as far as they possibly can. I particularly welcome therefore one of the items you have of rewarding or awarding or giving recognition to young men and women in various parts of our Commonwealth engaging themselves in promoting processes of transformation and thus involving themselves in that process. After all the central problem of youth, or indeed of anybody else in any given society, is this break of the nexus between them and what is going around them. They must be at the centre of changes; they must be the instrument of changes and all this must be as a result of growth of their own consciousness rather than purely because somebody is lecturing to them from the pulpit.

As for lecturing to them from the pulpit, I am afraid the contemporary age has one remarkable characteristic and it is this; there are no set ideas or beliefs, be they founded on religion or philosophy or ideology, which have any credibility about them, and therefore one is cut

away from moorings, whatever they were, either in a traditional society such as mine, or in a changing modern affluent society in Europe or other societies in Africa and Asia. I think we should also remember, although it will be an over-simplification, that there really are no problem children apart from problem parents. This itself brings us to another complicated situation that when we, for purposes of analysis abstract youth from a certain arbitrary age to a certain arbitrary end, providing two end points of the phenomenon called Youth, we must remember that at some time they were little children and then they were adolescents and then they were under the influence not merely of their family but of the society at large. Therefore, in order to deal with this problem, we have to be aware, the trainers will have to be aware, of this larger spectrum in which any human being, including youth, operates.

Mr Secretary-General, another interesting thing suddenly comes to my mind of what a great Greek Philosopher, the founder of Eleatic School, once said: Xenophanese said that the Ethiopians think that their gods have flat noses and black skin; the Thracians think that their gods have red hair and blue eyes; he went on to say that if the cows and horses could think of their gods and they could draw, the images of their gods would be like cows and horses.

This is important to remember because it relates to the relativity of things, relativity of concepts, ideas, traditions and any attempt to evolve a system, as it were, a system which does not take into account that each one of us is rooted in a tradition, in a concrete tradition, concrete parameters, social, economic, historical, cultural parameters, we are not likely to solve the problems, any problem, let alone the problem of youth. The trainers of youth must take into account, or have the competence to take into account, have the vision to take into account that what we are dealing with is not a generalized and abstract concept called Youth; but youth in a given society, youth changing in a society, conscious of the processes of change which are taking place everywhere. But one thing is quite certain, Mr Secretary-General, that we are meeting in a very turbulent age; all kinds of explosions one talks about — population explosion; scientific and technological explosion.

To me, at any rate, the most significant explosion of the later half of the twentieth century is the explosion of human consciousness. Gone is the time when man's care was bound by a few paternal acres; man's cares are no longer bound by a few paternal acres; man's consciousness embraces the entire world; one knows instantly what is going on in Paris, among the turbulent students of Sorbonne; one knows instantly what is troubling the youth of America, even if it be on the question of draft in

Vietnam; one knows instantly what happens in our own part of the world, in Gujarat, or Bihar; one knows instantly what happened in Thailand. Therefore, if we do not take into account this awareness, merely taking to the pulpit, as it were, of lecturing, is likely to be very unproductive and unrewarding. The trouble of lecturing is that it reveals the greatest amount of contradiction between what we say and what we do; between our beliefs and our actions; and the young people usually, having more subtle and flexible minds, not become rigid by processes of aging, instantly recognize the howling contrast or contradiction between professions and pretensions, what we do, what we say, what we profess and what we fail to do.

Sir, all that I have said may not be of much relevance. It may not be the kind of speech one ought to make on such formal occasions like inaugurating a Conference, but then I suffer from congenital incapacity to rise to any occasion such as this. These were some of the thoughts which came to my mind. I wish you with all my heart good luck in your work. It is an interesting work that you are going to do, provided that we are aware of two things that we are dealing with. When we talk to youth, we are dealing with the phenomenon which is at best a statistical abstraction; that its relevance can only be if it is seen in the context of a given, concrete historically determined society. The societies are vast and various. Although you may discern general features, I do believe that everything is unique in terms of Indian experience, in terms of Malaysian experience, Australian experience or British experience or Nigerian experience. Though the human mind generally tries to find similarities and tries to make general laws, we must, in human affairs and sociology, as distinct from natural sciences, be aware of our severe limitations in which we are operating any concept that you wish to operate with.

Thank you very much.



## LIFTING THE HUMBLE HIGH

I have great pleasure in welcoming you all in our midst and I hope in the deliberations which will follow we shall seek and find new paths for applied anthropology to aid the social and political organization in the country. Ours happens to be, as far as we know, the only institute of applied anthropology in the country. But we have every hope that as anthropologists get involved in the current problems of this developing community such institutions will multiply here. In fact we are aware that though there is no formal institute of such name, many distinguished scholars of this discipline have devoted themselves along with their enthusiastic bands of students to solving problems created by social and ecological change. Later, I shall have occasion to mention the specific projects undertaken by this institute. But there are university faculties engaged in comparable and equally fruitful work. I can refer to Professor Vidyarthi's individual work in this connection. Apart from applying his theories in the practical field he has also been orienting in course of field work a large number of students in this direction. In such hands this imprecise science becomes a tool of humanism. I am sure there are others in this country who study men to serve them and we shall in course of time get in touch with one another through [this institute].

We have travelled far from the early twenties when Malinowski was propagating his principles of practical anthropology, Far, because it is now beyond debate that anthropology of theory without practice is sterile. Far, because the controversy over ethical sophistry is nearly over. Historically the two decades between the Great Wars were the years of the decline of colonies. Almost everywhere these regions were areas of exploitation; in Africa, and many may have forgotten it was called till the other day the dark continent, more so. The problem for the practical anthropologists then was: would they work for the rulers for the colonies to prolong the exploitative regime or not? The colonial bureaucracy then had only one goal in mind: how to continue the colonial rule. In many cases the rulers themselves were self-taught empirical ethnographers — laying the rock foundation for much research to follow. In some instances professional anthropologists were employed or consulted. Initially they were disturbed. In some cases they reacted like Verrier Elwin. He tried to keep the tribes out of political and social change and developed his theory in his chapter "Growth of a philosophy" in *The Tribal World of Verrier Elwin*.

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Presidential Address in the Evaluation Committee on the "Problems of Socio-Economic Stratification in India", at the Institute of Applied Anthropologists.

In this regard, in a class room lecture, I pointed out “His great objectives are not to be questioned.” In 1934, in *Modern Review* he pointed out “the appalling poverty, destitution and ignorance of this heroic and fascinating people... You are equally certain to be awake at night — and for many nights — haunted by the scenes of suffering you have witnessed, and wondering what judgement must be passed on the society than can calmly allow such things to continue from generation to generation.” He continues... ‘I wanted to save what was beautiful, what was free... I was absurdly misunderstood, but the poets and artists were always with me. W G Archer, for example (wrote):

Among your burning hills, the lonely jungle  
Roars in the summer. The sterile land  
Rests; and news comes up like the clouds  
While you are active in the needs of peace  
Saving the gestures of happy lovers  
The poems vivid as the tiger  
Paced with destruction from the septic plains  
And you with your love and art delay  
The crawling agony and the death of tribes.’

Yet times have proved that Elwinism cannot and should not succeed. Varrier Elwin in 1939 wrote advocating some kind of a National Park in a “Wild and inaccessible part of the country, under the direct control of a Tribes Commissioner”. He explained the main objective was to preserve tribal integrity, and make them stronger without upsetting their culture. Later he realized his own mistake and wrote: “But although in the earlier years I had thought in terms of “preserving” tribal culture, I came later to think in a less static way...” He agreed that the backward ethnic groups also should adjust themselves to change and develop “along the lines of their own tradition and genius”. Now the confusion is cleared and the aim of applied anthropology is to aid the state and the ethnic groups to benefit by change, and not be overwhelmed by it. “The applied anthropologist must not resist the major stream of social change but devise means by which the weak and the deprived can swim with it, become stronger and survive”.

Other sensitive ethnographers also had their problems elsewhere. In Africa, in particular, the practical anthropologists made mistakes similar to those of Dr Elwin — and had in their turn to face the “disturbing” criticism, that they overemphasized the importance of tradition, and were hostile to development. While they were examples to

be avoided, the confusion of the role of applied anthropology vis-a-vis the state continued. Nadel (the authority on the Nudas) did not do much to clear the confusion "To be sure" he wrote:

(the anthropologist) might see no cause for disagreeing with the (State) policy, and the best way of imposing it might well be understood to be the one best serving the interests of the people. Even so, the anthropologist would abandon the standpoint of the scientist; he must pronounce upon the merits and demerits of particular courses of action, and thus introduce value judgements. Nor will issues always be as clear-cut and uncontroversial, so that the anthropologist has to take side, and argue from his own political and moral conviction. And if these had little chance against administrative considerations, or dictates of 'higher policy', personal frustrations would be added to the dubiousness of his position. All these issues were widely, and on occasions heatedly debated among the US and the British anthropologists. In an attempt to clear the air, the Society for Applied Anthropologist published in 1951 a carefully worded 'code of ethics'. Not all anthropologists were prepared to endorse this assumption of a moral mission on the part of a 'disinterested scientist'. The dilemma, then, though vital for the future of applied anthropology, remained unresolved.

In India, this Institute of Applied Anthropologists faces no such problem. It is not theoretically necessary in this country to hide the tribals in the National Park as Verrier Elwin wanted to. The Constitution of India gives full protection to the Scheduled Tribes and the Scheduled Castes. Article 46 enunciating the Directive Principles of State Policy provides:

The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of oppression.

Articles 330 and 338 provide for initial representation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Legislature. Article 335 upholds the claims of Scheduled Castes and Tribes to services and posts.

To oversee these constitutional safeguards the Government of India, in their Ministry of Home Affairs, have a Commissioner of Scheduled Tribes and Castes under Article 338 of the Constitution. Under Article 339(1) there is a provision for setting up a Commission to



report on the administration of Scheduled areas and welfare of Scheduled Tribes. It will be misleading to argue that the benign intentions of the Constitution have always been honoured. In fact the percentage of the representation of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes in the services in West Bengal (supposedly an advanced State) is 10 per cent to two per cent respectively. But that is against the law, which is the important fact — in history not merely do facts change the law but the law also can and does change the fact.

Such benignity of law is indeed based on sound facts — like that the Scheduled Tribes in the country are about seven per cent of the total population; the Scheduled Castes about 14 per cent. If these minorities combine with others, they can be a formidable political factor. Therefore, by making special provisions for these backward ethnic groups the Constitution has not merely promoted equality but recognized their potential political power. And it is in the enlightened interest of everyone in the country that the wielders of such power should learn to use it well.

Understandably there is now all round evidence of deliberate state attempts to promote the welfare of such ethnic groups through legislation and executive action. The Gurigan co-operatives of Andhra Pradesh have done much for tribal economic advancement. On paper the West Bengal Acts, recently passed, would appear more ambitious. The Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation Act provides for finance and cadres to organize the tribals into progressive co-operatives. The comparable Scheduled Caste Finance Corporation Act also can be an instrument of much progress for the toiling men of such caste groups. Other measures have been legislated, and it is clear that officially the State in India is committed to the welfare and progress of these ethnic groups. It is true that even today in many areas in India the low caste men and the men of the tribes are subjected to indignity and even physical torture. But such acts do not have today the sanction of the state, its law, and the dominant thought. It is no longer necessary for the head of the state to kill a low born for reading the *Vedas* — rather the discrimination against the low in the hierarchy is often a legal offence.

Under such circumstances, therefore, the applied anthropologist in India does not have to be like Elwin in retreat; he does not have to be torn by doubts and grope for a code of ethics. All that he has to do is study the Scheduled Tribes and Castes as they are, and try and close the gap between the law on paper and the actual conditions in the society. The law, and therefore the public morality, is on his side. That in the modern India is only natural. Here the state today is an Independent and self-governing entity, in which power is acquired



through adult franchise; no legal apartheid is possible. On the contrary the applied anthropologist should be finding the atmosphere increasingly congenial. There is today on the part of the decision makers a pronounced tilt towards the poor. As we shall later see it is possible to identify in India, in a considerable measure, the economically poor with the socially deprived. In other words the Scheduled Tribes and Castes are getting from the politically powerful a much greater degree of attention. This is gratifying to the applied anthropologist.

What is equally gratifying is that pure science today is responding to applied politics. The Science Congress this year had Rural Development as its focal theme. The political arithmetic and the balance sheet in rural development is easily read. It is a happy sign that the scientists are emerging from their laboratories for application of their theories in the field. The dismal science has today a note of cheer for the poor. It has to be admitted that the politicians took the initiative in this sphere, and the academicians followed. Later I shall have occasion to refer to the contribution of the Planning Commission in this regard. And the various social or pure scientific disciplines are clearly responding. It is pleasant to feel that to study poverty or nutrition levels today no longer invites an anti-Communist stare but perhaps qualifies a scholar for a fellowship. But then why should the applied anthropologist oppose Plato? Why should he oppose the welcome association of the Prince and the Philosopher? We as an institution have, from the very beginning, been involved with human organization and poverty. We are happy now that we are in the company of the learned and the great.

## II

The focal theme of this session is the socio-economic stratification in the country. It obviously assumes the existence of a social hierarchy and an economic one. The question is: are the two identifiable? Another question arises simultaneously. What is the basis here of social hierarchy now? Until very recently the hierarchy was one of caste — to a certain extent even among the Muslims. To what extent has this caste hierarchy weakened? If caste disappeared as the basic factor from the hierarchy then social and economic stratification would be identical.

We have good grounds to conclude that caste is still the dominant factor in social hierarchy in India. In the traditional matters of ritual, commensality and concept of purity caste may have lost some force in the urban areas. But in the rural areas, where 80 per cent of the

people in the country live, caste hierarchy is the social hierarchy. And there is no doubt that most of the poor are to be found amongst the lowest classes.

It is not denied that there can be high caste poor also. There in fact are; a recent nutrition study in Dum Dum areas showed that the high caste families were lower below the nutrition line than many tribals. In another micro-study it has been seen that the middle castes are the dominant land owners. In the urban areas it is known that wealth has almost always been in the hands of the middle castes. But all rural and urban micro-studies indicate that the social proletariat is also by and large the economic poor.

Even amongst the middle castes the spectrum from affluence to poverty is wide. Take for instance the dominant land owning caste in this district — the Mahishya. Many of the economic proletariat also belong to the caste. We have here in the field of production the exploiting Mahishya land owner and the exploited Mahishya landless. Comparable conditions will be found in Burdwan also. But the Dom, the Bagdi, the Bauri and others of the lowest part of hierarchy are invariably the poor.

Other problems arise if one wishes to study economic hierarchy. What is the quantum of material deprivation which constitutes poverty? In other more affluent countries yardsticks in these matters must needs be complex. But in India it is simple; poverty line can be identified with nutrition line. It is, as the men, women and the children are given their 2000 calories of nutrition and 60 gms of protein that we can start thinking of other material and cultural requirements of this large segment of society. These various efforts need not be always sequential. Education without material development is asking for social trouble; on the other hand material development is faster with the aid of education.

In this vary district our Institute has selected two areas where socio-economically, caste-class identification is possible, and where we are attacking the material and cultural problems of poverty. In these areas we may cease for practical purposes to be theoretical purists for the time being, and consider the tribals also as castes. In any cases many low rung castes are merely de-tribalized ethnic groups; other tribals try like the Dhibars and the Lodhas have establish a contact with the *Varnasrama*. Only the Santals stand alone, defiant against the Brahmanism of the north and the Pseudo-Kshatriyas of Central India. For our applied work, however, the social position of the Santal vis-a-vis the *Varnasrama* causes no problem.

Earlier we have referred to the tremendous support we have in our Constitution. Before I finish I ought also to refer to the sub-plan of our

state for the tribal areas on which the practical anthropologist will have to lean very heavily. The main thrust of this sub-plan is to ensure:

- (A) Maximum economic effort for their economic welfare through:
- growth of output and per capita income;
  - creation of opportunities of employment;
  - improvement of infrastructure facilities; and
  - provision of minimum needs, basic amenities.
- (B) Equally important is the object of the development of the quality of their social and cultural life through:
- elimination of all exploitation;
  - giving them control of means of production;
  - improvement of their inner strength; and
  - participation in the use of national resources and development.

The objectives are almost identical with ours but perhaps our efforts are humbler. But such a sub-plan is to us a great source of encouragement towards continuous progress, along with detribalized castes, for whom the government have formulated comparable objectives and methodology. In one point we differ with one of our masters, Herbert Fisher — we believe that progress is a law of nature. We believe along with that great socialist Jesus Christ:

He has brought down monarchs  
from their thrones,  
And the humble have been  
lifted high.  
(St. Luke 1-52).

Thank you, gentlemen.

## SECULARIZATION OF THE INDIAN MIND

Mr Chairman, you must forgive me. I am not either mentally, nor spiritually nor physically in a fit condition to articulate anything this morning. I have come with the entire purpose of really to listen and re-charge my batteries.

I have listened with great attention to, if I may call you, Madhuji (Madhu Limaye-ed.), esteemed friend, and I have no difficulty at all in agreeing with almost everything that you have said, in terms of perception of our country's situation, its problems and prospects.

He raised one question about trying to clear our minds about this word called "secularism". With great respect, with great humility, I would like to submit one proposition, which I think is the only possible antidote to the kind of thinking we often do.

I was deeply moved in a sense by my dear friend, Girilal's (Girilal Jain-ed.) speech. He says he is torturing himself, struggling himself with some thinking as to where and which direction to go. So, I would not deal with him in anger, as my friend, Dr Agwaniji did, but really in compassion.

It seems to me that perhaps one of the great pitfalls in our thinking process is the divorce from, what I call loosely, viewing human conditions on this earth as a historical process. The moment we disjunct it, we are left to grapple with an item which we then say is perhaps a thing in itself. So, it seems to me that the same sort of problem arose in secularism, because really in terms of history there was never a world which began with secularism as a well-designed concept. It was the end product of a long drawn-out, continuing and continuous process in human affairs, in all societies, under all conditions; it is not specifically a European phenomenon. We have had our own process of what is called secularization of the human mind.

To give a very concrete example, nothing has destroyed the sacredness of Agni with the discovery of the match box. What is this process? It is a long drawn-out process whereby we human beings reserve what belongs to the domain of our effort and what must belong to the domain of our faith. It is an important distinction. It is the direct result of cumulative human knowledge, expansion of human knowledge and our capacity as human beings to tackle problems without bringing in articles of faith. So, the domain of politics, the domain of economics, the

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Speech delivered at the seminar on "Survival of Secular Indian Nationalism", organized by Krishna Menon Society, New Delhi in 1990.



domain of society, the domain of industry are subject to the process of secularization.

A very fascinating example is Newton's own declaration. He was, in secular terms, the discoverer of fantastic laws, which to this day hold back large part of the universe. Yet, he believed — another side of Newton — he said God created matter and matter was indestructible. Yet, by the process of secularization of the mind, which means asking questions, taking into account evidence and empirical things and saying why it does not fit in with the theory, we have extended beyond Newton's universe, indeed a very complex universe no doubt when it comes to science, where reality treats us between theory and uncertainty.

So, I would submit that there is no confusion about it. We do not have to re-define what is Indian secularism, what is Chinese, British or French secularism, I submit, if we understand it as a long drawn-out continuous process in which we, human beings, have been involved, if you believe in that evolution of human beings from, let us say, living in Kandas(sic) and Candrawood(sic) stage to agriculture and later stages, it is an on-going process. It is not ending and it has its implications to the domain in which we apply knowledge ascertain facts to areas of engineering, to areas of social engineering, to areas of economic engineering, to structuring what is called political structures. I would make that submission first.

So, to me there is probably anti-historical thinking. I think one of the worst things that have been said in our country is we have Indian secularism which we served, *Sarva Sanjami*; if you want a translation, it can be perhaps *Iha Sansara Bahadustare*, something like that. It is the *Itihasic Prakriya*. *Is Prakriya ke dwara maanav jaati samajthi hai Ki kya kaam use karna hai or kya ho jaata hai, kya eeswar ko socho, ya parameswar ko*. This is one submission I should like to make for your kind thought and consideration.

Therefore, I should submit that my friend, Shri Rahman is absolutely right, during our period of nationalism, due to compulsions of nationalism, we did not define it, we slurred over it and we said Gandhi was a wonderful man of total tolerance, a total thing (sic) to Hindu.

The idiom, the language, the image, came somehow to be like that. It is no use denouncing him for that purpose, but this seems to have taken place. There was a reaction, especially amongst the middle classes. You know what happened in 1936-37, the mass contact movement, because the idiom was wrong, because he did not sit up and say there is something wrong with our thinking, so much so that even if you glance through the entire works of Jawaharlal Nehru, the words

“secularism” and “secular” cover a very small area of his writings. He also comes round to the view that secularism is tolerance. Of course, tolerance is there, tolerance is required as a part of civilized behaviour. Tolerance to preach ke thee Asoka ne apne edicts ke upar, Kaha tha, Tum doosre dharm ke izzat karoge Tabhi apne dharma ke izzat badegi.

So, it is not tolerance. *Sarva Dharma Samabhava* is a kind of doctrine for them. But it has nothing to do with secularization of human beings; the secularization processes which are going on are a kind of interaction between, if I may say so in Hindi, *Manav Jati ke chetana ki Prakriya, Pratikriya, Samaj Sevak ki hai, pragati se hoti hai; usse gyan nikalta hai, vigyan nikalta hai, uska isthemal ham karte hain, apne samaj ke prasno ko samajne keliye, suljane keliye.*

The biggest question before us, Shri Girilal says, that Islam is not bounded by the concept of a nation, it is a universal religion. If I may say so with great respect, it is an anti-history view. Islam and Christianity were founded at a time when the whole concept of a nation-state had not emerged. Therefore, how do you expect it to be western? Therefore, it became universalized; the Christian church became universalized. Then, ultimately, as Madhuji rightly pointed out, it got mixed up with power, set up the Holy Roman Empire, came to grief. So, unless we take a historical view of human conditions on this earth of ours, we will not grapple with our own situation in our country. Our own situation is, we have had a great civilization, we have our songs, our dances, our literature, our speculation, our philosophy; all kinds of questions have been asked in our country, both in the domain of art, culture and science.

As I have always said, it is not part of our historical experience to face the problems of creating a modern state. We had the Maurya Empire, we had the Gupta Empire, we had the Mughal Empire, we had the Kakatheyas, Satwahanas, Yogis, all kinds of these, [before] the creation of the modern state. Is this a valid concept or not? Born as I am, for the last 35 years for all my sins, I have been in the arena of international affairs, regretfully in the arena of international affairs of molecular unit of existence, still as a sovereign state. May be some day *Vasudeva Kumtumbakam* will come; but it is not so yet.

So, nations are willy nilly driven to have a territorial identity and that territorial identity is subsumed within the conceptual framework of the state. Is that valid or not valid? Who would decide whether we regard it as valid? What is the nature of the state? Can we go back and say It is a Hindu State or a Muslim State or a Christian State? The moment we do that, alienation takes place. In our Constitution we could have said “We, the Hindus, the Muslims, the Sikhs, the Christians of India”; instead of

that, we have said “We, the people of India”. The people of India is an aspiration, is an abstraction, because concretely we are Bengalis, we are Hindus, we are Muslims, we are Kashmiris, Rajasthanis, Maharashtrians, Chitpawans, Vaishyas and so on and so forth. So, this question is thrown up before our history for the first time, to which many, great thoughts have gone. Ram Mohan Roy thought about it, Vivekananda thought about it, R C Dutt thought about it, Lokamanya Tilak thought about it and yet it is that which is teasing us in the world of today.

If I come to the world of today, I submit for your kind consideration one single theme. In the world of today, of the twentieth century, the last decade of the twentieth century, unless we take stock of two factors, we will neither succeed in political engineering nor social engineering, nor in utilizing optimally the advance in human knowledge expressed in science and technology. This century, due to the political process feeding it — national movement, revolutionary movement, democratic movement — have exploded human consciousness. I have submitted this way back in 1974, in my humble way; this century has two explosions to cope with, the explosion of human consciousness and explosion of science and technology. How do you marry these two concepts of a given society? Have we in India the concept of a good society?

At the moment, we have given ourselves over to a consumerist society and market. I am not saying there should be no market. In fact, personally I think the great genius Nehru settled for two things — full-fledged democracy and a market plus a planning system; both are required. Now, when we look at the world and the changes which are taking place, if I may say so, I do not agree with Madhu Limaye when he says that the western civilization is dominant. If one looks at the micro-level, at the dilemmas and perplexities of the United States, France and Britain, the cultural segment, seemingly it may look as if the edifice is standing, but within, it is corroded and eroded and are morally sick societies. It is not an accident. I had an argument with my American friend, who said “All of you, gentlemen, are feeding us, Latin America, Peru and so on, by sending us all the drugs”. I said: you are a great devotee of the sacred law, the market; have you ever heard of supply without demand; why do not you look why there is demand in your society in such a massive scale for drugs? I read the other day Tom Nickels in *New York Times* saying America is falling apart, all the infrastructure is falling apart. So, your statement is not true. Let us not be so beguiled by the glitter of the western hemisphere, any more than by the doctrinaire dogmatic conversion of a beautiful dream into a dogma.



That dream to me is valid, shall remain valid, so long as we remain human.

What is that dream? The dream is a continuing dream of love, compassion, justice, *karuna*. The Marxists had been asking the question: what are the sources of inspiration of humanity? Why did Buddha's message stand, why did Jesus' message stand, why did Mohammad's message stand? Is it not well known that Jesus had to contend with Pharisees and the Philistines? Who is a Philistine? The Philistine is a person who, if he happens to have an idea, regards it as an itch and wants to get rid of it. Those of the Philistines, standing themselves at the freshness of a Jewish person's message; please change your society on the beads (sic). What was the message of Buddha? The sources of sorrow and suffering. What was the source of Mohammed? He was born in the midst of penury and tribal barbarism. Here was a man who was trying to synthesize Islam and Judaism, brought his own perception. It became Islam, Judaism and Christianity. It shows the synthesis — Moses to Musa, Gabriel to Gibrel, Abraham to Ibrahim. Only he laid down one condition, there should be only one God, not the son of God.

I think humanity has reached a stage and Indian humanity too, because here is a form, basically and essentially universalist, according to me. The strength of India, from time to time, has come to transcend even our divides. The divides are there. *Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya* and *Shudra* is a classification, structural classification of ours trying to bring it under structure of the four-fold classification. But every great mind of India, every great spirit of India, has attempted to transcend. If you say "we are Hindus" then the essentiality is transcendence. It is not to get jailed as Hindus; you have to transcend.

Think of the impact of what is called Hinduism first of all, I hate this word; there is no history behind it; it is a borrowed word; it has no indigenous root. It was given to us by our good lords, the British, and we are the victim of it. We, the people of India, have schools of philosophy, schools of thought, the emergence of fantastic diversity; we have also phases of nationalism in India, of statism in India, because we have not come round to breaking the vision of India as a tapestry or as a garden where every flower has its existence, has its identity and yet part of the garden. So, we have got a somehow monochromatic nationalism concept, with a single language, unified sort of culture; India will not, and the world of today will not; because of identity, unless we respect the Naga identity, we are obsessed by that; I am obsessed by Assam. There is no Hindu-Muslim problem there; and yet when I go to Gawahati, I get disturbed by the degradation of the ULFA.



So, I would submit that we who try to think, we must think historically; only then the whole process of secularization of the Indian mind will take place. You may say there is no quasi-religion; no. There is a place for religion, provided religion is re-defined as the primary concern to feed the spiritual needs of the human beings; not as a church, not as a dogma, not as a book. Those spiritual needs are everywhere asserting themselves, which we have neglected. Those spiritual needs will [be met], in this great age, as consciousness is exposed, awareness is exposed, knowledge is exposed, science and technology is exposed. On the one hand we can say we really abolish hunger; on the other hand, we are hungry. Why? We say we have knowledge and we are in this strait. Why? We can become compassionate, but we are cruel. Why? All those questions are arising on a global scale; naturally, they arise in our country. We must in an honest manner, without any ego, have a conversation. I have nothing against Girilal; he is also trying to think may be, wrongly; it does not matter — but that can be settled by argument and not by *lathi*.

I do not want to go on. I think Madhuji has a shrewder perception of our intellectual faith to really respond to this poison, which will destroy above all the Hindu; there is no doubt at all. How will Hindu survive? Nothing will destroy communalism more than the Hindus, because in the world as it is today, even partitioned India, the Republic of India with its Constitution, we have 200 million Bangladeshies and Pakistanies. We have within ourselves millions and millions of people professing different faith. How do we structure it?

So, in the global situation of humanity, the human condition today, the alternate situation has this much in common; everywhere the human spirit, human aspirations, both the hunger of the mind and the hunger of the heart are rising and the question is: can we honestly meet it? I personally think we can. We, within our country can be the centre of a new civilization of which we are proud, of which the hallmark is universalism.

Thank you very much.

# FUNDAMENTALISM AND SECULARISM

In the charmed world of Alice in Wonderland, words can be made to mean anything. Regrettably, outside that Wonderland, words have to be used with utmost care. The context in which a word arises must be understood if we are to avoid unnecessary sorrow and suffering. Ever since human beings began expressing themselves through words and then language, a measure of sacredness has been attached to a "word". According to our own tradition, in the beginning there was "Word" and that word was *Om*. Great care was taken in articulating the vibrant resonance of *Om*. Similar sanctity attaches to a Muezzin's call: *Allah-O-Akbar*. In the Christian system of faith and belief, the second person in the Trinity is "Word". When a person makes a statement or promise to do something "upon my word", sanctity attaches to that statement.

We have said enough to make the simple point that "words" have to be used with utmost care. In order to do so, we must understand the context in which each word arose and the shades of meaning which it acquires through the passage of time. All this might sound somewhat pedantic, but the Information Revolution, which is shaking the world, makes it necessary to point out the dangers involved in our failure to be meticulous, even fussy, about the use of words. In these notes, we are particularly concerned about two words, namely, "Fundamentalism" and "Secularism".

Many dignitaries visiting our shores in recent months, more especially from the United States and the United Kingdom, have warned us about the rise of "Islamic Fundamentalism". It is perhaps, their hope that India's social and political climate might be receptive to their warnings. That hope is not without some basis. That is why it is necessary to examine critically the genesis of the word "fundamentalism". How did this word arise in the English language? The *Oxford Reference Dictionary* explains it thus:

Strict maintenance of traditional orthodox religious beliefs; a religious movement which developed among various Protestant bodies in the USA after the First World War, based on strict adherence to certain tenets (e.g., the literal inerrancy of Scripture) held to be fundamental to the Christian faith.

The *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences* elaborates the origins of fundamentalism as follows:

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*Man & Development* : December 1991.

Fundamentalism is the name of an aggressive conservative movement in the Protestant churches of the United States which flourished during the decade after the World War. It manifested itself chiefly in the Baptist, Disciple and Presbyterian churches but received considerable support from other ecclesiastical groups. It was characterized not only by its conservatism with regard to traditional popular Christian beliefs but also by its aggressive efforts to impose its creed upon the churches and upon the public and denominational schools of the country. Its conservative supernaturalism was expressed in the 'five points of fundamentalism', which included the doctrines of the inerrancy of the Bible, the Virgin Birth of Jesus, the supernatural atonement, the physical resurrection of Jesus and the authenticity of the Gospel miracles. The first of these points was interpreted by fundamentalism to apply particularly to the Biblical account of the creation of man in opposition to the theory of evolution, which became the central question of the fundamentalist controversy.

The movement was directed against liberal elements within the churches and against purely scientific or secular interests in American civilization.

It may be noted that fundamentalism as it arose in USA allied itself to political conservatism against liberal elements within the churches and against purely scientific or secular interests. Enormous pressure was exerted on teachers and schools of a large number of states to purge the text books of all references to Evolution and substitute it with Creation. It may be of interest to note that:

In the social sources from which it drew its strength fundamentalism was closely related to the conflict between rural and urban cultures in America... the fundamentalist attitude reflected the distrust of reason and the emphasis upon emotion, the doubt of human ability to solve ultimate problems and the reliance on divine agency which are characteristic not only of much traditional Christianity but also of those groups which have received the least profit from a rationalized culture and of pioneer or isolated rural societies which remain most conscious of dependence for their livelihood on those processes of nature which are least subject to human control. The rationalism and self-reliance of the opposing groups, on the other hand, had been fostered not only by science and education, but also by industrialized culture with its rational and artificial methods of

production and its immediate urban environment, all largely subject to human control. (*Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*, p. 527).

One can, perhaps, formulate a generalization about causes generating fundamentalism expressed in religious terms. Whenever human beings in larger or smaller aggregates in any society perceive that their physical and spiritual well-being and their future cannot be achieved through reason in politics, and thus become assailed by a sense of fear and uncertainty, they would tend to fall back upon fundamentalism as the only emotionally stabilizing factor. Insofar as there is a growing potentiality of the rise of fundamentalism in countries where people profess Islam, it is directly relatable to massive frustration of hopes and aspirations of the peoples concerned for both bread and liberty. Historically speaking, these frustrations are the direct result of policies pursued by the West, including the United States, in the entire arena which embraces Pakistan, Iran, Turkey and the entire Arab world. Naturally, these frustrations might also grip those areas of the former Soviet Union in which people have Islamic faith.

One cannot meet the challenge posed by the rise of Islamic fundamentalism by the application of military force. It can only be met if the faith of these people in the possibility of improving their sense of human dignity, their identity and promise of a better life is seen to be understood and translated into diplomacy practised by the western powers. The other scenario is too horrendous to contemplate. Surely, those who warn India against the rise of Islamic fundamentalism are not contemplating the revival of the crusades or of religious wars. One should learn from history that neither the crusades nor the religious wars fought in Europe between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries yielded decisive results in the victory of one religion over the other or victory of Protestantism over Catholicism. It is indeed ironic that fundamentalism should have resurrected itself in the United States amongst the Protestant sects.

In our own country, religious fundamentalism gains adherence only in the measure that reason retreats in politics, money and muscle power suffocates democracy, cultural and ideological pluralism is sought to be snuffed out by fundamentalism expressed in religious terms, whether in the name of Hinduism or Islam.

Our country has, for several centuries, interacted both with the Arab world and Persia. We have interacted with Islam. And if India had remained undivided, we would have, in the Republic of United India, more than 300 million citizens of the Republic professing Islamic faith.



We respectfully ask how *Hindutva* would have coped with *Akhanda Bharat* containing 30 crore of Muslims? That is why we began by expressing serious anxiety about improper use of words.

It would be erroneous to assume that the mind-set which is labelled by the word "fundamentalism" is invariably connected with religion. Any rigid dogma can degenerate into a fundamentalist mind-set crushing liberty and democracy. Fundamentalism can equally express itself in racist terms. The apartheid system in South Africa, in this view of the matter, must be regarded as an expression of the fundamentalist mind-set of white racists there. Hitler's Nazism was also fundamentalist, as it combined racist dogmas with retreat from reason and rationality. In pre-war Japan, Japanese fundamentalism was based on enforcing the Bushido Code; dissidents were persecuted for the crime of advocating "dangerous thoughts". The Stalinist persecution equally belongs to the fundamentalist species.

Our own social, political, economic, cultural and moral order is gripped with crisis. The centuries-old tradition, reinforced by a variety of oral traditions, helps our people in maintaining some sort of faith in their future. But this must not be over-estimated. Fear and uncertainty is seeping through millions upon millions of people. Our political leadership faces a great challenge to replace fear with hope and this can only be done by combining together the moral, spiritual, rational and scientific universe with which the names of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru are associated.

At this stage one must consider the meaning of the word "Secularism". Both fundamentalism and secularism are interacting attitudes of mind in human societies bounded by specificities of their own respective cultures and civilizations. They are not independent variables. In the English language, the word "secular" means "concerned with the affairs of this world, not spiritual or sacred" and 'secularism' means: "the belief that morality or education should not be based on religion".

Both the words secular and secularism arose as a result of the operation of a universal process which has been in operation in all societies from the dawn of human consciousness. In this connection we would like to draw the attention of our readers to the same column in the September 1991 issue of *Man & Development*, entitled, "Men, Events and Processes". By this process, the human mind is able to discern what constitutes the affairs of this world, as distinct from spiritual or sacred. Naturally, the outward expression of the operation of this process of secularization of the human mind takes a variety of shapes and forms

depending upon the cultural specificities of each society. Humankind began this process of secularization from the very moment they began asking questions like How and Why instead of Who.

In the history of our own civilization, we began drawing a distinction between matters relating to *Ih-lok* as distinct from *Parlok*. There is a similar distinction between matters relating to *Deen* and *Duniya*. The process of secularization is fed by the search for knowledge which grows into science-based knowledge. By this process, human beings endeavour, on the basis of knowledge, to grapple with the problems of political, economic, social and cultural structuring of societies. In Europe, the secularization process produced in time Renaissance, Enlightenment and Juristic humanitarian universalism. We can easily discern similar processes at work in the story of our own civilization.

It is important to remember that the process of secularization was powerfully helped by the elaboration of natural laws instead of laws derived from sanctity of religion. When, in the midst of this process, there emerged the modern nation-state, the question arose, and certainly arises in our country with a particular sense of legitimacy, about the nature and character of our state: Is state an instrument for enforcing divine laws? Alternatively, is state an instrument for the enlargement and protection of the totality of national interest transcending religious or denominational divisions? It is from these considerations that there arose the need for the state confining itself to the affairs of this world, and thus being secular rather than being an instrument of any particular faith or dogma.

It may be noted that the process of secularization is accelerated in the measure that a state, citizens and society are governed by laws enacted through the democratic processes. There then emerges a "law-governing state" and "law abiding citizens". In our country, we have laws and procedures relating to crime; we have laws relating to evidence; we have laws governing transfer of property and about taxation. All these are secular laws concerning the affairs of our world in India. In this view of the matter, it is normal and natural to have uniform laws governing all the citizens of the Republic of India.

If the words secular, secularism and secularization are to be understood as part and parcel of a universal process of secularization of the human mind, then we have inflicted enormous damage on the nation-building process in India, by a totally unacceptable and false translation of the word secular and secularism by equating them to the doctrine of religious tolerance expressed in the words like *Dharma-nirpekshta* and

*Sarva Dharma Samabhava*. These translations have produced great schizophrenia in our politics which, in time, has produced the situation with which we are now actually confronted in Punjab and Kashmir. And not merely in Punjab and Kashmir, but elsewhere too, when our politicians of all political parties make their electoral calculations in terms of "Hindu", "Muslim", "Sikh", "Christian", etc.

There is one more question which needs to be answered: What is the relationship between religion, howsoever defined, and processes of secularization? Is this relationship inherently antagonistic? The answer is no. The process of secularization merely leads to finding the domain of each, both at the level of individual and of society and state. That is why the word "Secular" as we have stated means "concerned with the affairs of this world, not spiritual or sacred". It is to be hoped that if the Republic of India is not to degenerate into a state of anarchy, the time has come to come to grips with the real meaning of such words as "secularism" and "fundamentalism".

## DEMOCRACY UNDER SIEGE

Earthquakes are measured on Richter scale. There is no way of measuring upheavals in human minds and hearts. However, unlike earthquakes which are still unpredictable, human upheavals can be anticipated or even predicted in our times given a measure of sensitiveness and a feeling for historical processes. We do not desire, at this stage, to sit in judgement over the rightness or wrongness of the upheavals caused by the government announcement on 7 August 1990 that certain percentage of employment opportunities in Central Government and its undertakings would be reserved, in accordance with the recommendations of the Mandal Commission, for the backward castes who have, historically, suffered both socially and economically. We are endeavouring to understand the state of mind of a large number of students in Delhi where the first tremors were felt.

Between the months of May and June, Delhi experiences every year the disgorging of a large number of students passing out of the Higher Secondary stage and engagement in feverish search for admission into the colleges and universities in the capital city of India. A very large percentage of these students, somehow, secure high marks. They first anxiously await the announcement of the cut-off point by each college for admission into various courses of study — Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Biology, English Literature, etc. All these students and their parents are found in a state of extreme tension. In July, admissions are finalized. It takes a little more time for securing admission to the hostels.

Classes had not begun to absorb the attention of the students. The tension generated by the search for admission had not even subsided when the government announcement came on the Mandal Commission Report. It was, therefore, not surprising that the tension caused in the process of gaining mere admission would have suddenly become aggravated in both students and parents when the thought must have crossed the minds of thousands of these students as to what would happen to them when they go out into the wide world in search of employment? As for students in their final years, they too must have felt a sudden darkening of their horizons caused by reservations.

Those in government who make policies ought to have anticipated the reaction which followed the announcement in August. Two elements were missing in the announcement: (1) perception of the



appropriate timing of the announcement; and (2) the rationale for the announcement. We would say that if the university classes had begun and the energies of students had been channelled into the learning process, the severity of the reaction might not have been the same in the month of November or December, as it was in the month of August. Also, if the social conscience and altruism of the student community belonging to the upper castes and economically better off sections of the society had been evoked, the rawness of their response could have been partially muted. Regretfully, this was not done. Shakespeare gave currency to the words, namely, "winter of discontent". Obviously, in our country, these summer months cause tension and discontent. According to folk wisdom, there is always a degree of stability when peasants, who are always in a disturbed state of mind during the lean period, are involved in gathering their harvest.

The convulsion among the student community was thus understandable. Given this state of mind, it was not difficult to anticipate the entry of Mafia-like formations enjoying political patronage of one sort or another into the arena of conflict giving it an anti-social and destructive character. We have been warning against the increasing criminalization of politics which is clogging the arteries of our democracy. We have been warning also against the increasing use of money and muscle power. The recent events in Delhi and elsewhere centering on the opposition to Mandal Commission Report ought to make us sit up and think.

We have been of the view that perhaps the most precious heritage we have of our national movement for freedom is democracy in our country. That democracy is under siege. If we are to lift that siege, some measure of agreement between all political parties on a code of conduct is urgently required. Every political party must pledge itself to abide by the verdict of the people obtained through the electoral process freed from the faintest suspicion of booth capturing and rigging. Those who engage in this practice should know that they are destroying the very foundation of our country's future.

Decisions taken within our Parliament and Legislative Assembly must be respected. Equally, decisions taken by our courts must be respected if we are to generate a feeling animating all sections of our society that India is a law-governed state. In this view of the matter, violent agitations on the street, declaration of *bandhs*, *gheraos*, arming the crowds with *lathis*, *trisuls*, swords and other symbols of violence must be eliminated from our public life by a code of conduct agreed upon by all political parties. If a majority decision in Parliament and Legislative Assembly is not acceptable to a political party, it would be perfectly

legitimate for that party to organize peaceful public meetings and persuade the people to their point of view so that when the next election comes, the electorate upholds the position of the opponents.

A sense of sacredness must attach itself to the people's verdict in democracy. Any other method of conducting our democracy is destructive of democracy itself. Might we ask: rightness or wrongness of which proposition is established by burning buses, railway coaches, uprooting of telephone lines, manhandling of ordinary citizens and by other acts of violence? Once democracy is destroyed and if the faith of our people in its efficacy is destroyed, anarchy would be guaranteed to prevail. The time has come for all of us, including the organized political parties, to think about the destructive nature of the prevailing crude calculus of gaining political power.

As for the Mandal Commission, extension of reservation to socially backward castes is as logical as the reservation to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The agitation against the Mandal Commission lacks moral dimension. We, belonging to the upper social and economic strata of society, who have benefitted most ought at least to say openly that we sympathise with the aspirations of socially and economically depressed fellow citizens of our country. We have failed to do so. Consequently, all the evocative power of words like "equity" and "social justice" have been rightfully appropriated by those in favour of reservations. Anti-reservationists have thus made themselves morally opaque. It is not surprising then that no political party has dared to oppose the recommendations of the Mandal Commission. In these circumstances, the sacrifices made by our young people by acts of self-immolation, as well as the natural grief of their parents assume an intensely tragic aspect.

Taking into account the wealth produced in the country and the pattern of its distribution, the idea of reservation comes naturally as a means of getting employment and income. However, we respectfully disagree with those who urge that caste consciousness being a deeply rooted reality in the social organization of our country, we must "accept" it. The theory of "acceptance of reality" urged by the so-called realists is both naive as it is dangerous.

Civilization is a record of human beings changing "reality". Raja Ram Mohan Roy did not accept reality. Mahatma Gandhi did not accept the reality of British rule in India. Voltaire did not accept the reality. Lenin did not accept the reality. Mao Zedong did not accept the reality. Copernicus, Kepler and Galileo did not accept the "reality" sanctioned by the Bible. Finally, Prince Siddhartha, Jesus of Nazareth and Prophet

Mohammad did not accept the so-called reality. We do not wish to labour this point any further. In this view of the matter any vision or design of India based on accepting "reality" is tragically flawed. That is why this journal has been advocating passionately a new movement for renewal, reconstruction and renaissance of India. Reservations may be necessary, but it would be destructive of our future if we reinforce the need for reservation by the ideology based on accepting the permanency of caste divide, religious divide, etc. There is a world of difference between "recognizing" reality and "accepting" it.

All these years since independence, we, the intelligentsia of India have suffered from schizophrenia. We have mouthed phrases drawn from the lexicon of Western liberal democracies. We have written essays on Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau and Mill. At the same time, we have pursued self-interest by adhering to the primordial divisions of our society. The politicians have also practised double talk and doublethink. That is why the word "secularism" mocks at us. That is why democracy is panting for breath. Ingenious arguments are invoked. We are, for instance, told that the issue of *Ram Janmabhoomi* and *Babri Masjid* cannot be decided in a court of law. Why? Because, we are told that it is an "emotional issue". Logically one could then argue that no murder case can be decided in a court of law because all murders arise out of a state of emotion. A society is a device through which emotions are sought to be put within the framework of law: Thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not be negligent to thy neighbour.

We would respectfully urge that at least organized political parties should not make "human emotions" a pretext for taking the society out of the paradigm of a law-governed state. Any attempt to do so is to invite destruction, anarchy and bloodshed. When, in the skies above the mother earth of India, Vedic chanting, the singing of Handel's Messiah and the Azaan are mixed together, why not on this earth? That is the message given to us by all the *sufis* and saints of India. Why does that message fail to inspire us to search for a solution within the framework of law?

The production of wealth and its distribution in our country poses extremely difficult and complex problems in the world of today. We know that the present inequalities feed unrest and anarchy and promote all kinds of conflicts, e.g., inter-caste conflicts, urban-rural conflicts, inter-ethnic conflicts, linguistic conflicts, inter-state conflicts, intra-regional conflicts, inter-religious conflicts, etc. But we should know that even with the best of intentions, it would take time for our economy to grow even to the stage where every human being would have employment to



generate the minimum income with which he or she could buy nourishing food. We have not succeeded in this. The failure in the area of providing food for the mind, namely, education and culture, is even more dismal and fraught with tragic consequences. Equally dismal are our health indicators.

Our political parties, who are busy inciting one set of Indians against another, should sit up and think seriously about a strategy for development which would not only guarantee our sovereignty, but would also provide the means and mechanisms of social cohesion rather than social conflict. It is our view that during the long period which is lying ahead for our economic, social and cultural development, we need to evolve a certain minimum code of conduct which will, at least, not outrage our moral sensibilities. Faith of our people in democracy and a law-governed society needs to be immediately reinforced.

In view of this matter, some 80 or 90 million people of India who have benefitted most from the economic development during the last 40 odd years have to think once again about their role in society. Mahatma Gandhi's truth may guide us. And he said that possession of wealth can only be justified if it is regarded as a trust. The well-off sections of society are too nakedly and visibly engaged in consumerism. All concepts of love, compassion and altruism have been drained off. Nobody, therefore, earns or commands respect. In such a state of moral sickness, anarchy, we repeat again and again, will keep breaking out.

We have urged in this journal earlier, but we should like to do it again with an extreme sense of urgency, that the nation-building process of India will break up if we do not alter the view that there exists somewhere the so-called "mainstream" into which others who do not yet belong must submerge. India can only be built and modernized into a nation of accepting and respecting every identity linguistic, cultural, religious and ethnic. We have committed a grievous error by borrowing the entire paraphernalia of ideas from the West. Under conditions of India's glorious and rich diversity we cannot copy the design of a modern state of France, Germany, Holland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden, etc. We would respectfully urge at least the readers of this journal to respond to some of the stray thoughts expressed in these notes.



## INDIAN DEMOCRACY : SOME REFLECTIONS

I must begin with a confession. As I advance in age, I find myself increasingly given to indulging in fantasies. I then imagine all kinds of things. In one such moment of fantasy, I found myself in the august and luminous presence of God Almighty. I could not see his visage because He had become *Nirakar* (without shape and form). But I imagine I heard His voice. And He said to me in a voice of great love and compassion: "Why have you come to me laden with fruits and flowers? Go back to the Earth which I have gifted to you. I have also endowed you with a heart and a mind. I have subjected the entire cosmos to certain laws which you must understand with your mind. You must work with your fellow human beings whom I have created. If you use your heart and mind properly, you reach happiness and fulfillment. If you do not, you will be subjected to laws of sorrow and suffering". As I heard the last words, my fantasy was broken. I came back to the Mother Earth.

As I, as it were, touched down, I had another sort of fantasy. I heard a voice full of pain and anguish. It was of Mother Earth. I heard her say: I am your mother Earth. Without me you cannot live. Look what you are doing to me. You actively participate in ravaging me.

The voices I heard in the fantasies I have narrated above, had probably its origin in a question which has haunted me for long. That question is: What are the sources of human sorrow, suffering and tragedies? I may be wrong, but I have found an answer to the nagging question to my own satisfaction which I should like to share with my readers. I do so with utmost humility. And the answer is that the root cause of human sorrow, suffering and tragedies lies in the arrogance that our ideas and beliefs imbibed in the process of our social existence enjoy immunity from change. It was, perhaps, this sort of perception of human mind's arrogance, which led one English poet to bemoan that human beings "wasting their hours" in "getting and spending". The same idea was expressed in Urdu when a poet wrote about the daily routine of facing the morning and ending up with the evening ( *Subah hoti hai, sham hoti hai, zindagi yonhi tamam hoti hai*). The same sense of deadly routine of life is expressed by T S Eliot when he wrote about "measuring one's life in coffee spoons". One should therefore not wonder that things go terribly wrong. Love and compassion give way to hatred and cruelty. Selfishness and greed corrode the very basis of the society which is predicated upon the assumption of a measure of altruism. In order that we may constantly examine and re-examine our mindsets and try to

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*Blitz*, Golden Jubilee issue, 1991.

ensure that the emerging realities are truly reflected in our minds, I have found it useful to have some idea of historical processes in time and space.

Fifty years is a speck of time in the long, long story of humankind's biological evolution. It is a minute speck of time in the story of humankind's efforts to allow his consciousness to interact with society and Nature and thus to gain knowledge with the help of which to improve the human condition on this earth. But it is tragic that though the pace with which we gain knowledge, both of Society and Nature and transform this knowledge into technology, gains ever increasing momentum, our mindsets and social structures do not change fast enough to absorb that knowledge for creating a good society in which the hunger of the body, the hunger of heart and the hunger of mind is abolished. And in today's condition of both our earth, and our total environment, there can be no meaningful good society which is predicated upon ravaging the earth and destroying the biosphere. The ecological and environmental concerns are very very real indeed. But we go about living our daily lives as if these do not matter at all. Does this state of affairs not confirm my belief that existing structures of ideas as well as social, cultural, economic and political structures, when unquestioned, would, in time, produce sorrow, suffering and tragedy?

The preceding paragraphs might provide a sort of backdrop to contemplating the history of our country during the last half a century in the context of certain macro aspects of world reality. Let us look back to the last 50 years and see how in these 50 years which represents my own life time, vast changes and upheavals have taken place as a result of aroused human consciousness acting upon the old structures of power as well as of ideas.

In 1940, vast areas of the earth in the continents of Asia, Africa and elsewhere were subjected to the overlordship of Britain and France, Holand and Portugal. Nazi Germany and Japan were bent upon creating an empire of their own. The United States presided over an informal empire in large parts of Central and South America and the world was engaged in the Second World War of this century. In 1940, German troops once again entered Paris and this happened when Governments of both Britain and France were convinced that Adolf Hitler would spare them. Indeed, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, Neville Chamberlin, had publicly proclaimed in 1938 that his agreement with Adolf Hitler would "secure peace in our time". Within eight months of that proclamation World War II had begun in which millions upon millions perished. The root cause of this immense tragedy, suffering and sorrow

lay in the mindsets of British and French politicians of that time, who simply refused to perceive reality. Playing the game of realpolitik, Stalin too thought that the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact would save the Soviet Union any attack from Nazi Germany. Contemplating this past history, one thing emerges with utmost clarity: tragedies in human history, human suffering and sorrow are the direct result of our mind-sets, our beliefs and avoidance of pain inherent in confronting reality, which invariably results in producing painful consequences.

The events of this century have made one thing absolutely clear — there is no escape from democracy. The founding fathers of our own country had the wisdom to recognize that India could not be contained in any political structure which was not democratic. Indeed one can see that human travails everywhere, specially in countries whose political structures were meant to reflect the revolutionary aspirations of the people, are not only under stress and strain but are experiencing vast upheavals because of the denial of democracy. There are convulsions across the breadth of the Soviet Union, and it is quite remarkable that from within the womb of Soviet society an agent has emerged — a man of vision who perceives the need for change and is trying to the best of his ability to carry out that change. Everywhere it is so. Even in countries where democracy appears to be firmly established — and I do not wish to minimize the American or the French or the British democracies — problems are arising where the ever-expanding horizons of human aspirations have to be met one way or another. In dealing with human aspirations and their flowering one must take into account that the first step is the establishment and gaining respect for the identity and dignity of each individual human being. Once that respect and recognition is given to one's basic identity, the task for transcending it is made easier. This is important for a country such as ours where glorious diversities exist in art, culture, literature, dance, drama, music, languages and so on. One must not seek to subsume this diversity in some sort of a priori notion of mainstream or ad-hoc Pan-Indian nationalism. Such an effort will be unproductive and might also lead to explosive situations. Therefore, in the structuring of modern India, the most difficult task is not merely accepting diversity, but also respecting it. Modern India can only be a tapestry, woven out of strands of different hues which together create a brilliant pattern.

When I look at the contemporary human condition purely from the point of view of the diplomatic history of our times, I ask myself the question: Why have the great variety of structures built up by diplomats since the end of World War II failed to take roots? And the answer lies, I think, in the fact that these structures have been built without taking into



account the ground reality of human awareness and human aspirations. I have in mind the collapse of CENTO and SEATO. We also know that the NATO and Warsaw Pact have extremely wobbly structures. We are witnessing the crumbling of the so-called apartheid system. In Chile, a dictatorship was established. In less than two decades, democracy has reappeared. The military set-ups, so familiar in Central and South America, have given way to democratic urges and passionate assertions of national identities. So, this explosion of human consciousness is the raw material of our times for our social, political, economic and cultural re-structuring in this century and the next.

There is another explosion which we cannot fail to take into account. One hears a great deal about the explosion of knowledge. This knowledge expresses itself in a variety of forms. For the first time we are becoming increasingly conscious of environment, ecology and the much-talked about “green” movement. Then we have the vast explosion in the natural sciences and in its wide and varied applications through technology. While cosmological and biological evolution count in billions of years, human civilization and the rapidity with which human consciousness and human knowledge explodes, reminds me of what an ancient Indian mathematician, Varaha Mihira said: knowledge once generated produces a kind of acceleration of its own. To put it scientifically, knowledge, science and technology grow in exponential terms. But human institutions, human ways of thinking do not respond to it. In the area of science — I do not mean merely technology, electronics, computers and so on, but a whole philosophy of science, the whole idea of this cosmos, of concepts of time of origins of things, of beginnings and end — one is now becoming painfully conscious of the place of human beings on this earth both in time and in space. We do not have the certitude of the Newtonian world but we have now entered upon a new concept of time and space which is balanced between variability and uncertainty. However, I would not want to mystify either of these terms. Both are measurable within the framework of the concept of probability in the area of mathematical statistics.

The Newtonian laws which still govern a large part of our universe were a truly remarkable achievement of humankind. These laws are still valid but not sufficient. If scientists had continued to believe, as Newton did, that God created matter and matter was indestructible, we would not have discovered the mysteries of the world of relatively. I am, therefore, reasserting the validity of what I said in the beginning that rigid and continuous mindsets constitute a major impediment to a truer perception both of the human condition and the possibilities of changing it. In this century, we have reached a new understanding of the



relationship between mass and energy and out of this understanding we ourselves have created the daemonic deity of atomic weapons. For a long time diplomats and military advisers tended to regard atomic weapons as one more kind of weapon. Their minds were clogged by the entire history of wars; the greatest philosopher of war being Baron von Clausewitz. Established religions had sanctioned "just wars" or *dharma yudha* or *Jehad* and Clausewitz legitimized war by asserting that it was a mere continuation of "politics by other means". Proceeding on the assumption that atomic weaponry was a weapon to be used, various strategies were worked out. One of these strategies, appropriately called MAD (Mutual Assured Destruction), generated a vast stockpile of atomic weaponry. There were discussions about limited nuclear wars. There was talk about "flexible" response. And there continues to be the most cruel waste of human ingenuity and resources in developing a system called SDI. All these are instances of human minds making themselves completely opaque to reality. And one can see the tragic consequences which flow from it. We know now that with the advancement of modern science and technology, there need no longer be hungry bodies, starved minds and famished hearts.

When we survey India in the context of human conditions prevailing in the vast continents of Asia, Africa and Latin America, we can justly take pride in the fact that we have resolutely spoken of democracy. However, we cannot rest, as it were, on our oars. Neither democracy nor human aspirations have limits. Our economist friends always try to quantify things. Poverty is quantified by saying that a person, man or woman, who does not have 2400 calories a day is poor; 40 per cent of our population is poor. But the problem of social dynamics is such that poverty and a feeling of deprivation is not a static concept. Tomorrow I may get two meals. Would my aspirations stop there? Would I not want not merely food, but also good health? Even if all of us are assured of food and good health, would we not wish to furnish our minds and hearts with education and culture? And what about housing? I am enumerating only a few aspects of human aspirations especially in our country. We have to admit to ourselves that despite impressive achievements, following our independence, we have to hang our head in shame that India of today has the largest number of illiterates. And since education and culture are principal inputs into any meaningful development process, there is urgent need for a serious rethinking about the adequacy of our policies in the field of health, education, culture and economic development.

As for democracy itself, it is essentially the means and mechanism through which human beings freely express their aspirations

and make their voices [heard]. We have to ask ourselves whether our political processes, our democratic institutions, our state apparatus which includes the judiciary, police, etc., are functioning in a manner that allows free choice to exist. Vast amounts of black money feed our political process. Free choice is often impeded by the entry of Mafia-like and criminal elements in our society. The exercise of political power often gets divorced from any purpose other than the promotion of narrow interests — one's family or caste. The insatiable demand for justice remains dangerously unsatisfied which leads to individuals taking the law into their own hands. In such a situation, Caesars can arise. Like knights in shining armour, they appear to be coming to rescue us. And if our society remains beleaguered and besieged and there is no attempt at keeping constant vigil and carrying out reform, Caesars can usurp power. Therefore, I would earnestly urge that all the citizens of the Republic of India, especially those who have benefited most from the development processes of the last 40 years, should acquire a vested interest in passionately urging reform so that our democracy continuously evolves from village to district to the State and to the Centre.

Mahatma Gandhi astutely observed that no cause can triumph without faithful agents. India desperately needs such faithful agents for keeping our democracy alive and functioning un-corroded either by money power or muscle power. When Roman civilization became effete and the elite of the society were constantly diverting their attention from facing the reality of their moral and spiritual degradation, history records that barbarians knocked at their doors. And when civilized Romans asked "Who is there?" the barbarians replied by saying that they had come to rescue the Romans from their "civilization". I devoutly hope and pray that the so-called civilized sections of our society will not allow themselves to fall into a state of somnolence and that they would bestir themselves and become conscious of the real parameters of the human condition both within our country and outside. We all know that democracy cannot be frozen into a static mould. It has to adapt, adjust and evolve itself to continuously changing situations and circumstances by enlarging the domain by which human beings can articulate themselves. The voices of human beings must be heard and not muffled, not muffled by the kind of devices which we are using today. Therefore, if the price of liberty is eternal vigilance, the price of maintaining democracy too is eternal vigilance on the part of all the citizens of the Republic of India. We cannot rest in a state of contentment. That is why we must dedicate ourselves to a new beginning.

So the problems and perspectives of Indian democracy stem

from the two broad parameters of our time, namely, the rising aspirations of the people and the knowledge that these aspirations can be satisfied if we apply the knowledge we have to feed the hunger of the heart and the famine of the brain. Those are the two major perplexities of the human drama on this earth. Our democracy must survive because without democracy there can be no orderly, stable and united India. We as citizens must remain extremely vigilant and constantly scrutinize the formal structures we have created, namely, the political, economic, social, legal and other such structures. Without that we cannot hope to stop what is called the criminalization of politics in our country — the Mafia-like formations, the phenomenon of booth capturing and rigging and the virtual collapse of any legal state structure. I always say somewhat jocularly that Marx had a dream when he said that there would come a time when we human beings would be so advanced that we will not need a state and that it would eventually wither away. We seem to have reached that stage in Bihar where the old adage *Jiski lathi, uski bhains* — roughly translated, "He who wields the stick, owns the buffalo" — seems to operate.

Mere slogans of "decentralization" or creating Panchayati Raj institutions will not do. I am not suggesting that we should not have Panchayati Raj. But we must understand that the legal system called Panchayati Raj must not legitimize the existing power structures in our villages and districts. If it were to do so, it would intensify the friction between the rural power elite and the vast mass of not only small and marginal farmers, but also the increasing number of landless labourers and artisans. If you have Panchayati Raj with no faithful agents at the grassroot level, it will only reflect the existing *lathi* and the existing possession of *bhains* by the *lathi* holder. All this would require the active intervention of faithful agents who uphold the cause of democracy.

The Congress party failed to fulfil many of its responsibilities. The government of coalition which we now have — I do not decry it, I accept it — is the product of our lack of sensitivity to the need for constant renewal. After all, they say life consists as long as the cells in the body constantly renew themselves. And when they cannot renew themselves, we die. This is true of the body politic too and of the state apparatus and the systems that we erect.

The makers of our Constitution had a vision of a society inspired by the concepts of justice, liberty and equality. Can we honestly say that our economic system, for example, is inspired by such concepts? Here I am not advocating one of the populist slogans called socialism which will come to grief if we go on using it in the manner we have used it so far.



The world of the nineteen-nineties is going to be a world of hope, of turbulence. But we can structure it, our India and the world also at the same time, only if we free our minds from the accumulated debris of antiquated ideas which have failed to relate themselves to the emerging realities. It was said at one time by politicians that politics is the art of the possible. Fair enough. But I can demonstrate to you that in this day and age nobody need be hungry or uneducated. The central problem of politics, then, is to answer the question which is raised, which will be raised with increasing impetuosity, namely, why that which is possible is not being realized and why a large mass of people remain uneducated, hungry and culturally deprived? Our minds are immersed in the slogans of the past and we are unable to see that some of our antiquated ideas hinder us from coping with the problems of renewal, renovation and renaissance that our country needs. Countries, which are richer in producing the material aspects of life can perhaps muddle through. Indeed, the British used to pride themselves on always being able to muddle through. We in India lack the cushion for muddling through.

John Stuart Mill said that if, in a given country, people have food to nourish their body and they receive education through which they acquire a cultivated mind, they can build any pattern of civilization. Japan is an ideal example of Mill's insight into the potential of human endeavour. In comparison to Japan, India is more richly endowed with natural resources. Our people display remarkable capacity to acquire all kinds of skills. Yet "the tryst with destiny" seems to elude us.

There are two areas which ought to cause us concern — our continuing incapacity to give nourishing food to our people and lack of an educational system with strong components of motivation, values and culture. Our educational system is a vastly expanded version of the system erected by Macaulay. It is a system which produces literacy but not education. And it certainly does not sensitize our people to art and culture. Macaulay rightly said that the British were under compulsion not to interfere with the religion and culture of the natives, indeed, Macaulay would even deny that Indians had any culture and civilization. In fact, the British widely advertised their "civilizing role" in India.

We are in the habit of making passionate speeches about our ancient heritage and civilization. According to that heritage and the values implicit in it, human beings who are insensitive to *Sahitya*, *Sangeet* and *Kala* (literature, music and art) are verily like animals even if they do not possess tails and horns. As for the value system, we have the ancient adage that human beings who are without *vidya* (acquired knowledge, learning), *tapa* (penance, religious austerities), *dana*



(charity, munificence), *gyan* (intuitive knowledge, wisdom), *sheel* (character), *guna* (merit, virtue) and *dharma* (principle, prescribed code of conduct) constitute a burden on this earth and they wander about like animals.

I am not denying that in the last four decades economic development has taken place. However, the entire process of "development" has not taken place in an integrated fashion. There is a divide between the development process, education, culture and institution building. It was a sensitive economist, Nobel Laureate Simon Kuznets, who remarked that the wealth of nations which appears in the form of goods and services is a complex interaction between "ideology, technology and institutions". It is my belief, born out of my experience, that we Indians totally lack the culture appropriate for institution building. We also somehow lack the culture of working together. The primordial caste system fractures the attempts to foster co-operation and institution building transcending the narrow divides. That is why our university system is showing signs of decay. We also do not seem to have an understanding of the concept of "a system" as distinct from a person. This has tragic consequences as is evident in the decay of our institutions.

Our economists measure with utmost care and mathematical precision a variety of indicators such as Gross National Product (GNP), the product of each state, per capita income, indebtedness (both internal and external), income distribution patterns, money supply, savings and investments, etc. All these measurements are important and must be carried out. However, everything about human beings, both as individuals and in societal formations, cannot be measured. Love, compassion, tolerance, altruism, work ethics cannot be subjected to the discipline of mathematics.

The poet Iqbal acutely observed that democracy is a kind of system of governance in which individual human beings are counted, but they are never weighed. Societies are sustained as much by a moral order as by material satisfaction. The tragedy of Indian development has been that those who have benefited most materially are unable to set moral standards and thus defy Mahatma Gandhi's injunction that acquisition of wealth would be justified if the wealthy were to hold that wealth as a sort of trust.

Our democracy is a precious heritage. It cannot be sustained unless it resonates with the two values implicit in a democracy — equality and respect for each individual. I think the time has come when a serious rethinking is necessary. I do not say that the past 40 years are wasted

years. We have resources at our command now which make it possible to dream of a better society in India. But we need to define such a society. We need a debate and discussion on this vital theme, both at the national and international levels. But we cannot have such a debate unless we escape from the tyranny of frozen concepts such as capitalism, socialism and communism. Nehru, with remarkable insight, knew that these rigid categories are deceptive. He saw the validity of both the planning system and the market system. We call ours a "mixed economy". However, a mixed economy must not degenerate into a "mixed-up economy" in the name of high technology or liberalization of export-led growth. Our country, for a long, long time to come will need a mixture of a great variety of technologies, ranging from high to intermediate to low.

As we contemplate the contemporary scene around the world, we see that the eternal problems of war and peace have taken on a new dimension. The hunger of the heart and the famine of the brain is still there. What we need today is not a monochromatic concept of the Indian State, but a polychromatic one — the concept of a *gulistan* or garden, where every living being is at peace within itself. Inner peace must be the bedrock of our security. Jawaharlal Nehru once observed that he was endeavouring to create within our country a "just society by just means". Our political parties — and I say this with utmost humility and respect — have to give very serious attention to the question of "means". A search for power in India with reckless disregard for this "means" is to invite unnecessary turmoil, turbulence and conflict. Every political and social order throughout human history is sustained by two vital principles: Firstly, it is sustained by *Iqbal* and secondly it is sustained by *Sunwai*. It means that a political order bereft of morality and in which people feel that they would not be heard, is bound to end in chaos. Regretfully in our country there is a clogging of the arteries of democracy. And if we are to clean things up, nothing else than a movement of all thinking and feeling people dedicated to the renewal, reconstruction and renaissance of our country is urgently required.

## SOME SCATTERED THOUGHTS

Despite the passage of time and the various enquiries, we still do not have the answer to the question: who killed Indira Gandhi? In the popular memory, the answer to that question is encapsulated in a phrase according to which, "Indira Gandhi's Sikh security guards killed her." A slight twist was given to that phrase by the organizers of rumours and the word went round that Sikhs killed her. To our undying shame, hell then was let loose in the capital city of the Republic of India and elsewhere too.

Our public life has been in the process of being so completely drained of compassion and tolerance that no one said that it was not Sikhs who killed Indira Gandhi any more than Hindus killed Mahatma Gandhi or Christians killed Abraham Lincoln. Among the followers of all faiths there are bestial and barbaric human beings. Such bestiality can be induced by sophisticated methods of raping the human mind and conditioning it.

Political assassins are always instruments of someone else's decision. Once such a decision is taken to eliminate a person from the political life, one can always find instruments for carrying out that decision. Adolf Hitler found a mentally unsound Ludendorf to put the German Reichstag to fire. Consequently, the gnawing question is: who decided to terminate the life of Indira Gandhi and now of Rajiv Gandhi? We would not be able to find answers to these questions. But we must not bury them and must keep continuously asking them, if only to save our country from a state of somnolence.

The emotions generated by the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi are still too raw and fresh for anyone to calmly assess the part played by him in the political life of our country, since he was reluctantly drawn into it after Sanjay Gandhi's death. All that we can say is that he meant well but did not quite know how to translate his design or vision through either the instrumentality of the State or the Congress Party. Rajiv Gandhi's failure is not uniquely his own. It is part and parcel of our incapacity as a people to build and sustain institutions and systems. In fact, all our institutions, as well as systems, have been decaying and disintegrating over a period of time. The most recent victim of the general malaise is the UPSC.

It does not require too much of imagination to see the consequences of the decay of our institutions. One can feel it everywhere and see it too. If fairness, justice, protection of life and limb and property are not assured to the citizens of the Republic of India,

violence will be secreted through all the interstices of our society. If we add to it the feeling that decision-making processes at all levels have to be greased by money, the conflicts and tensions inherent in the process of transformation of our society will become unmanageable. There is no thermometer for measuring these tensions and fevers, but one could have some idea from the increase in the number and great variety of our security forces, and the occasions on which our valiant armed forces have been increasingly deployed for maintaining law and order.

Some of our economists glibly talk about limiting our defence expenditure. But it would be useful for them to study the expenditure, both at the national and state levels, incurred on the maintenance of law and order as well as the periodicity with which our regular armed forces are deployed for that purpose. In Brazil of today, there is such a lack of faith among the people that criminals will be brought to book that a new way has been found to deal with such criminals. Mobs gather together and engage in public lynching of those whom they consider to be criminals.

Our politics and politicians are so excessively concerned with acquisition and exercise of state power that the entire game of politics, as it is played in our country, has got divorced from any purpose other than promoting narrowly conceived interests of heavily fragmented constituencies based on primordial divisions of Indian society, such as caste, ethnicities, religion, language and region. Historically speaking, the Indian National Congress, and later, the Congress Party, somehow managed to strike a balance and appear at least to transcend the divides. It was, therefore, able to hold, as it were, the centre of India's nationalism.

But this capacity of the Congress Party to hold the delicate balance has been in the process of unchecked erosion. This became all too visible three years after the death of Nehru when the general elections took place in 1967. Between 1967 and 1971, attempts were made to transcend the divides. The slogan of "Garibi Hatao" was made credible by the nationalization of 14 banks and the abolition of princely privileges. The words "Garibi Hatao" were meant to prevent the poor, dispossessed and the deprived from being divided in caste, regional, religious or ethnic terms. The long-suffering people of India responded magnificently. However, soon thereafter, "polities" as usual intervened and, today, we witness divisions, and the resulting disintegration of secular nationalism among various social classes, interest groups, religion-ethnic groups, caste groups, etc., who are all naturally aspiring for the good things of life — food, health, education, culture, roof over the head, etc.



At the time of writing this, we do not have with us a detailed analysis of the results of the elections held for the tenth Lok Sabha as well as for some of the State Assemblies. However, we are quite convinced that, dispersed over the vast expanse of our country, there are still fairly large segments of our society who respond to the memories of, what we can describe as, "Congress traditions". In this view of the matter, the Congress Party has been given the last chance to renew and renovate itself. And by Congress Party, we mean to include in it all those persons who can understand the imperatives of secular nationalism and vibrant democracy. This is the major task facing the country at this historical period of our time. And it cannot be brought about without intense debate and discussion.

We have been of the view that perhaps one way of overcoming the divisiveness and fragmentations inherent in the process of social and economic transformation is to give serious consideration to the presidential form of government. Such a form would make for greater stability and greater efficient governance of the country than the present parliamentary form in which the prime minister must, of necessity, sacrifice efficiency and quality because of the compulsions to satisfy the various constituencies, even within a single party, which has led to having as many as 57 ministers in the central government. Simultaneously, we just cannot afford to delay further the setting up of several tiers of self-governing institutions, the village upwards. We also need urgent consideration of redefining our existing federalism. We need to do all this with a sense of urgency if we are to address ourselves to the real problems of our country's national integration.

It is tragic that public discussion in our country is not giving attention to reforming our institutions and systems. It is also failing to discuss the problems of "ideology". All our attention is focused on the economic crisis. We do not deny that our economy is in a state of acute crisis, in the sense that there is a breakdown of fiscal discipline and the balance of payment position is extremely critical. Also, the monetary and fiscal situation was made more critical by not presenting the budget in February this year. The result has been that our country's credit-worthiness fell so low that it is, reportedly, just a little above the holders of junk bonds. This critical situation has to be met by the customary prescriptions of devaluation, reforms in trading practices and trying to narrow the tremendous budgetary gap.

These short-term fiscal and monetary measures will bring short-term relief. Consequently, the task of conceptualizing the political economy of India on medium- and long-term basis needs to be attended

to with as much urgency as the short-term palliatives. But it would, in our view, be extremely tragic for the future of our country if we search for just an "economic solution" to our national problems.

Economics, politics, education, health, culture, work ethics, public morality, feeling for quality and reliability are a complex set of interacting elements. For scientific analysis, one assumes certain variables to be constant. But it would be a grave error to make any hypothesis to exempt them from the discipline of ascertained facts. We are not trying to take away the glory from the discipline of economics. But we deeply share the concerns expressed by an increasing number of sensitive economists about the inadequacy of their discipline. Just listen to one such voice. It is the painful voice of an American Nobel Laureate economist Wassily Leontief. Even at the risk of burdening these notes, we quote him below extensively:

Economics today rides the crest of intellectual respectability and popular acclaim. The serious attention with which our pronouncements are received by the general public, hard-bitten politicians, and even skeptical businessmen is second only to that which was given to physicists and space experts a few years ago when the round trip to the moon seemed to be our only truly national goal. The flow of learned articles, monographs and textbooks is swelling like a tidal wave; *Econometrica*, the leading journal in the field of mathematical economics, has just stepped up its publication schedule from four to six issues per annum.

And yet an uneasy feeling about the present state of our discipline has been growing in some of us who have watched its unprecedented development over the last three decades. This concern seems to be shared even by those who are themselves contributing successfully to the present boom. They play the game with professional skill but have serious doubts about its rules.

Much of current academic teaching and research has been criticized for its lack of relevance, that is, of immediate practical impact. In a nearly instant response to this criticism, research projects, seminars and undergraduate courses have been set up on poverty, on city and small town slums, on pure water and fresh air. In an almost Pavlovian reflex, whenever a new complaint is raised, President Nixon appoints a Commission and the university announces a new course. Far be it from me to argue that the fire should not be shifted when the target moves. The trouble is caused, however, not by an inadequate selection of targets, but rather by our inability to hit squarely any one of them. The

uneasiness of which I spoke before is caused not by the irrelevance of the practical problems to which present day economists address their efforts, but rather by the palpable inadequacy of the scientific means with which they try to solve them.

If this simply were a sign of the overly high aspiration level of a fast developing discipline, such a discrepancy between ends and means should cause no worry. But I submit that the consistently indifferent performance in practical applications is in fact a symptom of a fundamental imbalance in the present state of our discipline. The weak and all too slowly growing empirical foundation clearly cannot support the proliferating superstructure of pure, or should I say, speculative economic theory.

Much is being made of the widespread, nearly mandatory use by modern economic theorists of mathematics. To the extent to which the economic phenomena possess observable quantitative dimensions, this is indisputably a major forward step. Unfortunately, anyone capable of learning elementary, or preferably advanced calculus and algebra and acquiring acquaintance with the specialized terminology of economics can set himself up as a theorist. Uncritical enthusiasm for mathematical formulation tends often to conceal the ephemeral substantive content of the argument behind the formidable front of algebraic signs.

...The mathematical model-building industry has grown into one of the most prestigious, possibly the most prestigious branch of economics. Construction of a typical theoretical model can be handled now as a routine assembly job. All principal components such as production functions, consumption and utility functions come in several standard types; so does the optional equipment as, for example, 'factor augmentation', to take care of technological change. This particular device is, incidentally, available in a simple exponential design or with a special automatic regulator known as the 'Kennedy function'. Any model can be modernized with the help of special attachments. One popular way to upgrade a simple one-sector model is to bring it out in a two-sector version or even in a still more impressive form of the 'n-sector', that is, many-sector class.

...By the time it comes to interpretation of the substantive conclusions, the assumptions on which the model has been based are easily forgotten. But it is precisely the empirical validity of these

assumptions on which the usefulness of the entire exercise depends.

What is really needed, in most cases, is a very difficult and seldom very neat assessment and verification of these assumptions in terms of observed facts. Here mathematics cannot help and because of this, the interest and enthusiasm of the model builder suddenly begins to flag: 'If you do not like my set of assumptions, give me another and I will gladly make you another model; have your pick.'

Policy-oriented models, in contrast to purely descriptive ones, are gaining favour, however, non-operational they may be. This, I submit, is in part because the choice of the final policy objectives — the selection and justification of the shape of the so-called objective function — is, and rightly so, considered based on normative judgment, not on factual analysis. Thus, the model builder can secure at least some convenient assumptions without running the risk of being asked to justify them on empirical grounds.

To sum up with the words of a recent president of the Econometric Society:

...the achievements of economic theory in the last two decades are both impressive and in many ways beautiful. But it cannot be denied that there is something scandalous in the spectacle of so many people refining the analysis of economic states which they give no reason to suppose will ever, or have ever, come about. ...It is an unsatisfactory and slightly dishonest state of affairs.

Let us leave aside Leontief's divine discontent and come to examine some experiences of our own. Out of the goodness of our heart, we said that we must have some "poverty removal programmes". The history of the past two decades is full of dead and dying bodies of such programmes which bore hopeful names, such as Marginal Farmers Development Agency; Small Farmers Development Agency; Integrated Rural Development Programme; Employment Guarantee Schemes, Rural Employment Programme, Antyodaya; Minimum Needs Programme, etc., etc. Large sums of money were provided for each of these programmes. Then, we naturally spent large sums of money for evaluating these programmes, and discovered to our horror that each input of financial resources did not even produce the output of a mouse. Somewhere in the process of input and output, capital was consumed by a large variety of political and administrative intermediaries.

We would submit that the underlying assumption that the



political and administrative intervention required for carrying through the programme was based on the false assumption of "average honesty". The question then arises as to what is the relationship between an economic programme for poverty removal and the means and mechanisms through which it is to be implemented.

Adam Smith had predicated his perceptions on the operation of, what he described as, "enlightened self-interest". One might ask: from where does "enlightenment" come? Japanese industrialists and workers are found to be fanatically dedicated to quality control and quality assurance. Such fanatic devotion does not form part of any "economic theory". After going through the turbulence of industrial revolution, the British came to the conclusion that "honesty was the best policy". In our country on the other hand, advocates of honesty would be left out as mere "morality peddlers, fools and dreamers". Our politics has been, for some time, caught in the inexorable logic of money begetting power which, in turn, begets money.

It is to be devoutly hoped that those who might read our melancholy thoughts would, on calm contemplation, concede that the problems that our country faces, and will continue to face, are of extraordinary complexity. None of our problems can be solved simply through the insights of the social science called "economies", nor through such technical means as devaluation or through "structural changes". Of course the economists will turn around and say that they always make an assumption that public life, political life and administration would be assumed to be honest. But in all honesty, must they not concede that what they assume they themselves know is false? And it is because of the falsity of the assumption they make that our power-generation system continues to run at a loss; so does our Commercial irrigation system as well as many of the Central and State government enterprises, heavily eroded by political and bureaucratic interventions.

If there is any element of truth in what we have stated in the preceding paragraphs, that truth is of universal validity. No political party is exempt from this logic. The BJP, which has chosen its path to power through *Hindutva*, is tragically faulted. It is to be devoutly hoped, that the electoral successes registered by the BJP in the recently concluded elections will not blind it to the realities of our country's political, social, economic, cultural and technological transformation during what remains of this century and in the next. Conceptually, *Hindutva*, howsoever defined, negates the core of our country's civilization. That core can be best expressed in a single word: that word is "pluralism". The

great Emperor Ashoka proclaimed in his edicts that he who respects religions of other people raises the greatness of his or her own religion. We have no doubt that those within the BJP, who still think, will rethink and reassess the correctness of the path they have chosen. Of course, if our country moves deeper into unresolved crises in our society, the BJP may offer itself as a “Party of Order”. But we learn from history that coming to power through this path leads to the negation of tolerance and the destruction of the free market of ideas, on which alone democracy rests. Without democracy, functioning of institutions, more particularly, state institutions, get average efficiency and honesty, and we are bound to experience anarchy and violence.

Our “fearful meditations” do not blind us to the fact that our country has enormous assets in terms of resource endowments, entrepreneurship, scientific, technological and managerial skills, and a complex and sophisticated industrial structure as it has grown over the years, etc., etc. All these assets can only be optimized by politics imbued with a national purpose and public morality. That is a historical challenge facing our country now and in the future.

We must conclude by calling another distinguished economist as witness to the depositions made in these notes. In a moment of lucidity, Simon Kuznets — another American Nobel Laureate — said that wealth expressing itself in the form of goods and services was a product of a *complex interaction between ideology, technology and institutions*.

We know that the road to economic recovery will be a hard and difficult one. But if we are to maintain a degree of stability in our society during the next four to five years, the wielders of political power would have to make some sacrifices, as a condition precedent to any appeals they might make for a regime of austerity in our country. Smt Indira Gandhi abolished princely privileges. Is it too much to ask our ministers, members of parliament, members of legislative assemblies and ministers of various state governments to offer voluntarily suspension of at least such privileges of theirs which are not strictly related to the performance of their duties? We are not suggesting abolition of their privileges, but only suspension for a period of five years. The last parliament enacted a macabre scene when in its dying moment its members snatched some additional privileges.

Morality always flows head downwards. Public standards are always set by the power elite. According to our ancient wisdom, *yatha raja tatha praja*. Only if our political elite give up something can they appeal to others to “tighten their belts”. One might remind ourselves of another ancient wisdom according to which, *rinkarta pita shatru* (a father

leaving sons in debt is their enemy). We have, therefore, no right to mortgage the future of our children, nor, indeed, can we find an escape route by making the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as the centre of evil economics. We ought to know that the Fund, acting as a banker before whom we appear as supplicants for loans, applies the normal criteria which the Fund mandarins have evolved for assessing the credit-worthiness of the debtor. Their economic prescriptions are not inspired by any altruism. Also, the political terrain in which the IMF economic prescriptions apply does not obtain in India. The examples often cited as IMF success stories are, among others, Indonesia and Turkey. But, as we have argued, the political terrain in each of these countries is entirely different from that obtaining in India. For a country like ours, we cannot escape the responsibility of charting a course of economic development over a period of next five years in which we can restore to our economy vigour and vitality.

All citizens of the Republic of India, who think and feel about the human condition in our country today, cannot but take into account certain facts. These are:

- Ninety per cent of our people are without any sanitation facilities.
- Seventy per cent of our women are illiterate.
- Half of our people do not have safe drinking water.
- While most of our people are poor, close to 30 per cent are utterly poor.
- Forty per cent of the world's illiterate are in India.
- Our population still grows at 2.1 per cent per year.

Even while we do our very best to bring a healing touch to the sick, we must, at the same time, commit ourselves totally to a vision of society given to us by Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. Unless we do this, our entire society and our beloved motherland would be consumed by hatred and violence. Already social tensions and conflicts are mounting. Fires are ablaze in Kashmir, Punjab, Assam and elsewhere too. There is wisdom in the ancient proverb: *Na Koop Khananam Yuktam Pradeepte Vannihnha Grihe* (one does not start digging the well after the house is on fire).

If we are to cope effectively with the conflicts and tensions in our country, then it is incumbent on all of us not only to extinguish the fires which are already burning, but also to prevent fires from erupting again and again. If we are to do this, then we must recall the need for generating a new movement of all citizens of the Republic of India

dedicated to creating a "just society in our country by just means". In this context, the right to vote without fear or favour is, perhaps, the most valuable right that we, the citizens of the Republic of India, possess. Such a right is the central piece of our democracy. And, without democracy, we cannot resolve conflicts and tensions generated in the course of India's social, economic, political and cultural transformation.

The recently concluded elections should cause to all thinking and feeling citizens of India alarm. The exercise of "free choice" is becoming increasingly difficult and is attended by violence, rigging and booth capturing. Also, elections in our country require deployment of an ever-increasing number of security forces of all kinds. Is it beyond the realm of possibility for all the political parties to enter into public commitment not to indulge in violence and other malpractices? They should be content to accept with grace the verdict of the electorate freely arrived at and wait for the next five years. If this culture fails to inform our democracy, there will be increasing alienation from the democratic process itself. As it is, in the recent elections nearly half the electorate did not exercise its sacred right to vote freely. As for the reconstruction and renewal of our economy, some serious thinking has to be done in terms of Indian specificities — demographic, cultural, political and social. Upto the formulation of the Fifth Five Year Plan, we had erected certain signposts pointing to the path to be traversed during the course of development. These signposts were:

- Zero Net-Aid
- Self-Reliance
- Land Reforms
- Growth with Social Justice
- Growth with Stability.

Even while we meet the immediate crisis of payment of our debts, which are bunching up in the month of July 1991, we have to consider what are the new signposts which we are going to erect. Human beings live by symbols. What are these new symbols? Such questions cannot be answered by economists alone. The leadership of our political parties is on trial. The worst thing we can do to this country and its future is to fail to identify the real problems and their possible solutions. The present day cliches like "Inter-dependent world", "Opening up", "Liberalism", "New Liberalism", "Self regulated market", "Privatization", etc., have to be defined and made meaningful to the masses of our people. This is not uttered as a platitude. For, in this day and age, the "mass" do count in any design for political, economic, social and cultural engineering.



## COMMITMENT : A DIRTY WORD?

If one heard voices of an animated discussion with frequent references to Great Britain and the USA, one could be certain that a section of our intelligentsia was engaged in an intellectual effort to comprehend some aspect of India's problems. And if one heard a rather more animated discussion laced with quotations from Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao Zedong, Marcuse or Debray, one could confidently assert that our radical intelligentsia was engaged in an intense effort to re-enact on the Indian stage the Russian, Chinese or the Cuban Revolution or some variant of the New Left drama, paying no heed to old Marx audibly giving the missing line that "we do not want to anticipate the world dogmatically, but to find a new world (of India) from the critique of the old."

The somewhat non-scholastic way of classifying our intelligentsia will not be complete without adding to the list two more categories at least: those falling within the first of these can be identified by their raised voices denouncing all imported ideas and concepts; by their devoutly seeking light from the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, the *Shastras* and the *Puranas*; and, with the fervour of an inverted patriot, hoping that by a combination of chanting of appropriate *shlokas*, astrology, *Tantric vidya*, worship of the favourite gods and the newly emerging saints, with an occasional *yajna* thrown in, they might magically solve the problems of the contemporary world.

These ancestor worshippers amongst us are of many political hues. But they all seem to forget the lesson of the fable of the four sons of a Brahman who, reaching the very first cross-road of life, could not decide which way to turn even though they had learnt all that there was to be learnt from the ancient scriptures. And so, they followed the funeral procession of a *Mahajan* which led them straight to the wilderness of a *shamshan*. There can be little doubt that our country would be laid more desolate than a *shamshan* if we, in turn, followed the ancestor worshippers. With such melancholy thoughts, we come to the last category of our intelligentsia; their spiritual physiognomy has remarkable resemblance to the category we have just described. However, their atavism is more active; their voices louder, their slogans more populist and their banner reads socialism.

The intellectual effort of our intelligentsia might look comic if it were not so intensely tragic. Wherein lies the tragedy? It lies in the fact that our thought processes and their products have become derivative.

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The little spark which kindled some luminous thoughts during the period of our struggle for independence is being extinguished even though one comes across here and there some hopeful signs of individual effort to come to grips with real life. The rest is all sterile, theological scrimmage.

The debate on the question, viz., whether civil services ought to be committed or not, dramatizes the sterility of our intellectual effort. The answer to the question raised with such pompous profundity can be given quite simply and truthfully: our civil services are in fact committed. They are committed, first of all, to themselves and their nuclear family. And in this respect, the quality and the range of a civil servant's commitment is in no way different from that of any other Indian. Aren't we all committed to looking after our families; to protecting the honour of our wives, mothers and sisters; making secure the future of our nephews and nieces and, if possible, of the members of our sub-caste, caste, community and region? Why should a civil servant be expected to have any other commitment than, say, a politician or a member of any other profession in our country?

Our civil servants are thus not lacking in commitment. It is the nature of their commitment which requires examination both in its origins and in its evolution. Academic puritanism might revolt against such rhetorical posing of the problem. But if the critics conclude that the problem has been correctly posed, one might even offer an apology for the rhetoric.

What does "commitment" mean? It means engagement on the part of a human being that restricts his freedom of action. If I, for example, engage to be honest, then such an engagement would restrict my freedom to be dishonest. If I engage myself to be self-regarding, then I restrict myself from being other-regarding. "Commitment" when so defined might appear as an individual phenomenon. However, commitment on the part of an individual is a product of the value system of a given society in time and place. Of course, no society is so uniform and so homogeneous as to be informed and motivated by a single and unique value system. But there is always a dominant value system. Some sections of a society might wish to conform with or acquiesce in it; others might revolt against it.

Another fact about the value system and the commitment related to it might be noted. At no stage of the evolution of human society from the most simple and primitive to the most complex, would one find its members free from the constraint of a value system and its concomitant commitments, whether accepted because of social compulsions or because of attainment of higher consciousness of rights,

obligations, prohibitions and inhibitions. While commitment is thus inextricably bound up with the value system in a society, the origin of a value system itself and changes within it are intimately connected with the socio-economic and political structure of that society.

Before examining the value system in our contemporary society in India, it is necessary to clear up the confusion deliberately created by insinuating that there was some sort of conspiracy to erode and to subvert the “political neutrality” of the civil servants which is such a precious heritage of the British Raj. Politicians, civil servants, learned professions, columnists and other self-appointed protectors of our heritage are fighting heroically against this attempted subversion. One rather suspects that all this simulated indignation is meant to divert attention from too close a scrutiny of the real commitments of the crusaders.

Confusion is also created by the implicit assumption that the “political neutrality” of a civil servant is somehow inconsistent with “commitment”. We are invited to look at the British civil service and seek inspiration. This we should certainly do. But we must know what a British civil servant is like. He is certainly “politically neutral” in terms of civil service regulations but he is a staunchly committed person. To him, “political neutrality” and “commitment” are not mutually exclusive concepts.

The British civil service is a product of the continuous evolution of British society. Its member, whether belonging to the Home, the now-defunct Colonial, Commonwealth or Consular Services and the Diplomatic Service shares the dominant value system of that society — a value system which is in harmony with the social origins of the British civil servant and is re-inforced by the entire educational processes to which he is subjected. Between the civil servant and his political masters, there is a sharing not only of the value system but a broad understanding of national interests, and of the direction of the evolution of society.

Neither the Labour movement, nor, indeed, the emergence of the Labour Party has made any significant difference to a British civil servant's “political neutrality” or his commitment to protect, promote, advance his country's national interest and to maintain the value system of the society consistent with the need for necessary adjustment and change. Symbolically speaking, it is the Labour Party which had to learn how not to drop the 'h'es and how to get used to not wearing the cloth cap. (When the first lot of Labour MPs turned up at Westminster early in this century, the ladies of Mayfair took them in hand, and did a thorough job of grooming them as defenders of Britain's national and imperial interests).

In contrast to the commitments and professional standards of the British civil service, the Indian civil services established by the British in India, which included the ICS and other satellite and subordinate services, are, at best, like orchids grown in a hot-house and, at worst, mere excrescences on a feudal social order. Bereft of a "sense of calling", immunized against social and political changes, insulated against tensions of a society crying for change, the civil services of India became merely an arithmetical sum of individuals seeking personal salvation under conditions of foreign domination.

Growing out of the womb of a rotting social structure, decimated by the caste-system, these services, both in their structure and function, could not escape the hierarchical compulsions. And so the ICS constituted themselves as the *Brahmans*, the IPS as *Kshatriyas*, the IA and AS, Imperial Customs and Excise as *Vaishyas*, and so on. The most classical example I came across of a member of a certain service being totally uncommitted to the society and its challenges was the confidential report on him in which his British superior had observed that he was "much too anti-Indian for his liking".

The fact that Romesh Dutt and a handful of others in the pre- and post-independence period rose above the colonial value system does not in any way alter the basic fact that there was never anything in common between the British and Indian civil services except the common conduct rule that both shall be "politically neutral".

Therefore, the less we compare and contrast the British and Indian civil service traditions, the more we might be able to examine the concrete situation prevailing in India and address ourselves to an identification of the real problems we face. Similarly, comparison with the so-called American "Spoils System" is irrelevant. The British and American civil service traditions are the end-products of the evolution of free societies over a long period of time and in entirely different conditions from our own.

Such traditions when divorced from their historical, social, economic, cultural and political context, have no meaning and significance for us. We cannot import them as one might import technology or, better still, items of consumption such as chewing gum. Coca Cola, wheat, a transistor and things *edjusdem generis*. (It may be noted *en passant* that even the absorption of technology and its assimilation is not possible without the appropriate socio-economic structure and the value system which goes with it).

We have now reached the stage in our argument when it might be appropriate to gather together the diverse elements of what might,



hopefully, emerge as an appropriate methodology for a study of “commitment”, both in its general aspect and in its relation to civil servants in India. The methodology postulates several working assumptions which could, of course, be varied, modified or even abandoned if the facts of our social, economic, cultural and political life demanded it. Until then, one must accept their inviolability.

What are these working assumptions? Firstly, that in the contemporary society in India as in any other society, its members, both as individuals and as groups, have commitments of one sort or another; secondly, that these commitments are integrally connected with the value system of the society; and, finally, that the value system is, in its turn, created by the socio-economic structure of a society and is powerfully influenced by its past heritage of ideas, values, traditions and culture. The result is that, at any given point of time, the value system is subject to the stresses and strains generated by the forces of continuity and those impelling change.

In his preface to the 1936 edition of *Religion and Rise of Capitalism*, R H Tawney observed that “in the triple reconstruction, political ecclesiastical and economic, through which England passed between the Armada and the Revolution, every ingredient in the cauldron worked a subtle change in every other... Puritanism helped to mould the social order, but it was also itself increasingly moulded by it.”

Concluding his study of the “triple reconstruction”, Tawney says:

It (modern capitalism) is that whole system of appetites and values, with its deification of the life of snatching to hoard, and the hoarding to snatch, which now, in the hour of its triumph, while the plaudits of the crowd still ring in the ears of the gladiators and the laurels are still unfaded on their brows, seems sometimes to leave a taste as of ashes on the lips of a civilization which has brought to the conquest of its material environment resources unknown in earlier ages, but which has not yet learned to master itself. It was against that system, while still in its supple and insinuating youth, before success had caused it to throw aside the mask of innocence, and while its true nature was unknown even to itself, that saints and sages of earlier ages launched their warnings and their denunciations. The language in which theologians and preachers expressed their horror of the sin of covetousness may appear to the modern reader too murkily sulphurous; their precepts on the contracts of business and the disposition of property may seem an impracticable pedantry. But

rashness is a more agreeable failing than cowardice, and, when to speak is unpopular, it is less pardonable to be silent than to say too much. Posterity has, perhaps, as much to learn from the whirlwind eloquence with which Latimer scourged injustice and oppression, as from sober respectability of the judicious Paley — who himself, since there are depths below depths, was regarded as a dangerous revolutionary by George III.

I have quoted at length from Tawney's concluding paragraph to illustrate the rigorousness with which he conducted his socio-historical analysis. One hopes that our economists, sociologists, political scientists and historians will work together to analyse in depth the subject matter of discussion in this issue of the *Seminar*. The methodology of such a study together with the working hypotheses have already been suggested.

Since commitment of individuals in a society is determined by its socio-economic, political and cultural configuration, we might consider its broad features. This should enable us to establish the correlations between the value systems and commitments, on the one hand, and the changing configuration of our entire social existence.

Our entire society is in the midst of three profound, fundamental and turbulent processes of transformation. Briefly stated, this ancient country of ours, deeply rooted in tradition, bound by a minutely subdivided hierarchical social system suffering from a long period of economic, social and cultural stagnation, is in a process of change. We are in a twilight period: the past has not vanished and the future has not quite emerged. And, as of today, we do not know if the twilight is of the dusk or of a dawn. And so old ideas, old habits, old thoughts, the old value system and tradition are in a constant tussle with new ideas, new values and new social relationships.

In our father's, grandfather's and great-grandfather's time — in fact for centuries upon centuries — millions of our people, in lakhs of our villages, lived their life governed by the traditional pattern of society. A man's life and work was determined by his birth. In hundreds and thousands of villages in our country, man carried on his profession which was given to him by his forefathers and the nature of his profession determined his status. There was no mobility. Here and there individuals might rise above the circumstances of their birth, but social and economic mobility was a statistical improbability. It was a society governed by the concept of status which in turn was determined by birth in a minutely subdivided hierarchical social system. But now our society is changing, howsoever slowly and painfully, but it is changing.

Man as an individual is painfully emerging. There is tension between old habits, old ideas and the imperatives of the emergence of the individual. What are these imperatives? What is their origin? The answers to these questions lie in the second fundamental transformation taking place in our country, viz., the transformation of a subsistence, feudal economy into a modern economy with modern industry and agriculture.

For our development, we must have resources in manpower, capital, managerial skills and there should be a co-efficient of efficiency between the input of capital and human resources and the output. The attitude to work has to be qualitatively different. The relations between man and machine in an industrial society are complex.

If one looks at all these factors in our country, one discovers that we have a long way to go to acquire the culture necessary for the modernization of the economy, both on the part of entrepreneur, be it the state or the individual, the management and the workers. If we are to succeed in consummating the industrial and agrarian transformation of India with a fair degree of efficiency, an entirely new individual has to emerge — an individual conscious not only of his rights but also of his obligations. The whole society and values sustaining it have to be restructured.

But, in our country, there are a large variety of people who are mere parasites eating into our scarce resources, contributing nothing to the creation of wealth, creating imbalances in our attempt to distribute our wealth with due regard for social justice and injecting into our political and administrative processes the virus of corruption. If parasitism remains unchecked, if the culture and the value system of the money lenders and traders continue to dominate industry, if management and workers remain solely concerned in protecting their wages and conditions of service in a manner unrelated to the production of wealth and the consciousness of the crying need for socio-economic and political transformation, the process of modernization of our country will come to a grinding halt.

Finally, we are engaged in the transformation of an India, deeply rooted in its traditions with thousands of years of its civilization and culture, into a modern nation-state. A nation-state is not, as it were, a part of the nature of things. A nation-state is a relatively recent creation and is intimately connected with the industrial revolution. Attempts to create nations where citizens could be bound together by ties of common religion failed in Europe. Similarly, states founded on a dynasty did not either succeed. It is not easy to create a modern secular state. In our



country, we say that we are a modern and secular state. This is more an expression of our intent than a statement of our accomplishment.

We cannot have a firm assurance of having laid the durable foundations of a modern nation-state without consummating the modernization both of our economy and of our society. Thus, a modern nation-state, a modern economy and a new society of free individuals are indissolubly linked together. If one is separated from the other, the entire structure tends to fall apart.

We might have a look across our western frontier. There a state came into being. It called itself Pakistan. It consisted of parts of Punjab and parts of Bengal, Sind, Baluchistan and the Frontier Provinces. The founding fathers of this new state thought that these could be held together by a single integrative force of religion. The tragic events of 1971 should be a lesson to all of us. Religion cannot provide the basis for erecting the structure of a modern state. And so, Pakistan fell apart despite commonness of religion because the state structure failed to take into account the importance of linguistic and cultural diversity and the consequences of an unevenness of economic growth.

A modern nation-state in India, with its wide and varying diversity, must of necessity be secular if it has to survive, grow and evoke the loyalty of millions of our people. The triumph of secularism is the necessary precondition of India's modernization.

If there is any validity in what I have said, then it is quite obvious that while we have to take into account the diversity of our country, we can transmute it into strength only in the measure that the entire social, political and economic thinking deliberately encourages the emergence of an Indian whose primary loyalty is that of a citizen of the country; that we encourage patterns of economic development and attitude to work which maximize the production of wealth and simultaneously engage in distributive justice strictly based on growth; and that we discourage in every possible way the manifestations of particularism of one sort or another, be it rooted in religion, language, region, caste or even the corrosive effects of money as a nexus between one man and another. Finally, we should ruthlessly eradicate parasitism.

Is it surprising that a society which is in a state of siege by the contending forces of continuity and change should show symptoms of utter confusion in its value system and, consequently, in the quality of the commitment of individuals and groups comprising it? Civil servants, politicians, members of the Judiciary and of other professions are often found accusing each other of either lacking in commitment or one forcing the other to change his commitment.



Behind this smoke-screen of controversy lies the grim reality of the lack of inner coherence in our entire social, economic, political and cultural existence. No dominant value system has yet emerged and the past broods heavily on the present. Some day, perhaps, the imperatives of the modernization of our economy and our society will create the new value system.

The constituent elements of the new value system can be deduced once it is accepted that India must quickly carry through the three-fold transformation if we are to emerge as a subject of history in the twentieth century and thereafter. Secularism in thought and action, honesty, integrity and hard work as ethical compulsions, austerity, national pride, sustained by intellectual and spiritual self-reliance and some regard for the scientific temper are some of the essential elements of the new value system.

Only when such a value system dominates our social life and sustains our educational processes can we talk meaningfully about commitment. Until then "commitment" will be bandied about as a dirty word by the whisky farmers, money-lenders and traders turned "industrialists", "contractors" and the whole lot of parasitic intermediaries including the trade unionists solely concerned with the whetting of economic appetites without raising the political consciousness of the working class. Essentially, therefore, a meaningful discussion of commitment must await the emergence of a coherent society with its concomitant value system.

## REFORMING THE ADMINISTRATION

A professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Myron Weiner, observed that "India's forte is one of crisis management". He added that "Instincts of its leadership are to cope, rather than innovate, and to work within an existing framework not only of institutions but of ideas as a whole". Weiner evoked such enthusiasm that at least one distinguished Indian journalist was moved to write that we had not done badly at all. Indeed we have not, especially if we recall all those moments of danger and suspense during the last 30 years.

Without any external assistance we rehabilitated nearly seven million refugees both from the Western and Eastern States of Pakistan. Simultaneously, 500 odd princely states within India were integrated into a common pattern of administration. During periodical droughts and floods, vast relief work was organized, together with movement of food-grains through several hundred thousand ration shops which today constitute the normal network of public distribution system. And in 1971, a crisis of some complexity associated with the emergence of Bangladesh was managed with fair competence. By way of postscript one should add that the crisis of Emergency was a singular example of failure of management through peculiar mindlessness.

With such an impressive record of crisis management no serious attention was paid to reforming the administration. It was assumed to be the best.

The only memorable event in the first decade was a visit in 1952 by Paul Appleby, Dean of the Maxwell Graduate School. His visit helped a great deal in promoting the establishment of a society of politicians and civil servants of India to promote mutual admiration. Both joined in periodically paying homage to the wisdom of the founding fathers of our republic, more specially to its first Home Minister and "patron saint" of the services, Sardar Patel, for preserving in all its purity the administrative structure established by the British Raj.

The centrepiece of the structure was the Indian Civil Service, popularly seen as a steel frame around which the imposing edifice of the new India was to be built.

The last batch of Indians was recruited into the ICS in 1943. In 1948 the first lot of the best and the brightest of young men and women entered the successor service called IAS (Indian Administrative

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Courtesy the *Guardian*, London, 7 November 1977.

Service), which is now the federal civil service for the entire country. For nearly a decade and a half the ICS/IAS combine was manning the district administrations in state capitals and in New Delhi. It was also running steel plants, supervising oil exploration and presiding over newly created public sector manufacturing enterprises. This was a little too much for the newly emerging class of technocrats and other duly constituted services, such as the audit and accounts department, railway and defence accounts, police, irrigation and power engineers, not to speak of the income tax and the customs and excise services. Tensions grew and have remained largely unresolved.

In the meantime, problems of effective implementation of programmes of planned economic social and cultural development began to loom large. The response was to spawn more bureaucracy. The public payroll groaned under the weight of the village level workers, agricultural extension workers, promoters of family planning programmes, workers in the primary health centres, block development officers, and development commissioners.

In the area of science, technology and management of the growing public sector manufacturing enterprises new organizational structures and cadres were created. These were meant to be immunized against the bureaucratic virus. And though a great deal has been done to professionalize the management of the public sector, whose performance has greatly improved, the combination of the traditional bureaucrat and the even more traditional politician has yet to comprehend the meaning of modern management and the need for autonomy.

The final battle has yet to be fought and won. The odds are against any systematic modernization of management of science, technology, and industry. The private sector is no better as its faith in the managerial competence of the sons, nephews and other cognates and agnates remains strong in spite of many genetic failures at replication of desirable qualities.

To provide a countervailing force against the vast sprawling bureaucratic structure, a system of local self-government was introduced in 1959. This was the famous Panchayat Raj legislation. There was to be an elected council for each village, each block, and each district.

There has grown over the years a widening gulf between the plans — their targets and objectives — and the means and mechanisms for implementation. This led to the setting up of the Administrative Reforms Commission. It laboured for several years and produced

several volumes of recommendations in 1970. This led to a predictable result. A Department of Administrative Reforms was created to process the recommendations.

The department has been for some five years like a brooding hen. But the chicks are yet to be hatched, and three decades have passed.

Let's peer into the future. Much would depend upon the relative weight put in favour of change as against continuity. And that would not be enough. We shall have to recognize that administration. Its structure and function, is part of the larger system of politics, economics, social organization and the value system. One cannot reform administration without bringing about corresponding changes in the entire structure of society. It is so forbidding a task that the younger men in our services display a broad spectrum of crotchets. Some would put Bakumin to shame for his mildness. Others read Levi Strauss. And still others believe that the open serame to our economic development is in organizing jacqueries a la Mao Zedong. The question is: Can our politics be somewhat less irrational and forward looking? That is the essence of the matter.



## RIDING THE BUREAUCRATIC HORSE

The problem of delimiting the frontiers of the respective domains of the politicians and civil servants in our country has remained unresolved. Things are getting worse and confusion is on the increase. Witness the recent case of the arrest and suspension of B B Vohra — a distinguished and upright civil servant who was, until recently, Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of Petroleum and Chemicals. By inviting pointed attention to Vohra's case, I do not mean to find an alibi for the rather more nasty things which happened during the Emergency. However, I should like to emphasize that the Emergency made the long-term endemic confusion more palpable. One wonders if the trend can be reversed.

According to the current mythology, the Emergency was the handiwork of a small coterie surrounding the former Prime Minister. This is true but it is not the whole truth. Did not the Cabinet, Parliament and the Executive endorse and carry out the behest of the coterie? However, more fundamentally, the Emergency represented the maturing of the crisis in our entire social, economic, political, cultural and value system which became increasingly incapable of solving the basic structural problems of building a new India. Our present government would serve the country better only in the measure it shows an acuter perception of realities and spends rather more time in understanding the extraordinarily complex problems in the light of hard facts as they are — and not as it might imagine them to be under the influence of past conditioned reflexes.

Be that as it may, I am not concerned in this article with an examination of the entire complex of problems but rather with the severely, and perhaps artificially, limited question of relationship between politicians and civil servants. And if, nevertheless, I have raised the wider issues, it is only to point to the obvious, which we may miss in the heat of the moment, that the specific issue does not exist in a vacuum. On the contrary, it is hopelessly entangled with the game of politics and of power as it is played in our country.

Let me, first of all, deal with a few basic concepts. Given the necessity for a state, the bureaucracy is an inescapable concomitant irrespective of the nature of the state. Even states emerging out of vast revolutionary upheavals spawn bureaucracy. Mao thought that he could alter the sorry scheme of things through cultural revolutions. But his

successors are settling down, looking for cats, black and white, who will efficiently perform their function of catching mice. So bureaucracy — i.e. government officials in their collectivity — constitutes an integral part of any state. The second essential point to note is that the bureaucracy in any state embodies the urges for the maintenance and continuity of that state and society. That is why conservatism has its natural ally in bureaucracy.

But in India conservatism has no mean. What are we to conserve? The vast poverty? The social structure hag ridden with caste? Illiteracy? Our incapacity to feed, educate and clothe people? In some other age, we might have frozen all these urges by erecting a rigid law-and-order state. But in these last decades of the twentieth century, the awareness of our people is so heightened that every political party appears with a flaming manifesto promising change. But the art of taking money from the rich and votes from the poor is becoming increasingly difficult to practise. For it is one thing to write a manifesto, it is quite another to put it into effect.

Thus verbal radicalism unsupported by a sustained political will and unsustained by political instrumentalities is doomed to failure. Faced with such a situation, the collective unconscious of our politicians mutters: "What can we do? Did not we mean well? Did not we pass resolutions? Did not we lay it down in our manifesto? Did not we adopt decisions in the Cabinet? The failure is due to our bureaucracy!"

Virginal academics whose knowledge of the facts of life is minimal write papers proving that our bureaucracy is dysfunctional vis-a-vis our democratic social order; politicians make speeches urging abolition of the bureaucracy. Periodically, we witness the recrudescence of such ill humour which brings to my mind the story current in the Nazi era — every Nazi, so the story goes, had a favourite Jew and, when two Nazis quarrelled, they beat each other's Jew.

Of course, it must be said that the structure of our bureaucracy is not particularly suited for transmitting the impulses for change. It has remained *virgo intacta* since the days of Macaulay. It was designed for the maintenance and continuity of the Empire. And, since no one thought of changing the design, the laws of inertia prevailed. But then one might legitimately enquire: On whom does the responsibility rest for bringing about the change? And why have all the changes made in response to the needs of development and planning been so ineffective? The public payroll is groaning under the weight of the village-level workers, agricultural extension workers, promoters of family planning programmes, workers in the primary health centres, block development

officers and development commissioners. The various agencies created for community development and other aspects of rural welfare are also languishing.

Someone said that the whole difference between efficient and inefficient administration lies in the creative use of officials by the elected representatives. Our attempt to mould the bureaucratic framework to suit the political processes at the local level took the form of democratic decentralization and the setting up of panchayat raj. But rural society with its segmented structures and primitive institutions exposed to modern democratic experience could not generate a responsive and creative leadership. The traditional order and the new political and administrative structure only created tensions. Empirical evidence shows that the conflicts and tensions between the officials and non-officials owe their origin to the prerogatives of power, personality clashes and self-aggrandizing tendencies.

Two things clearly stand out today in the countryside: (a) emergence of traditional propertied and social elites as ambitious, avaricious and power-oriented leadership; and (b) the officials' general lack of faith in the capabilities of the elected members to sustain and carry forward the key and central goals of society. The politicians are not satisfied with the formulation of policies for which they have little time, but reach out for a hand in their implementation to suit their particular end. On the other hand, officials without any change in their attitude, outlook or methods see in all this a challenge to their own position of power and status.

Is then all lost? Not necessarily and inevitably, provided we understand the logic of bureaucracy, even the existing bureaucracy in India, as a system. First of all, politicians as Ministers have a right and duty to enunciate clearly the policies. This right does not belong to MPs and MLAs. Along with policies, the bureaucracy, specially that part of it which is directly concerned with developmental processes, should be set concrete tasks and judged by an objective appraisal system. Once this is done, there should be no interference. Appointment, writing of confidential reports, promotions, postings and transfers should be sternly and rigidly objective; only then will the system work, provided Ministers have the skill, the will and sense of direction for riding the bureaucratic horse. This would require not merely ability but character and integrity. So the problem of relationship between politicians and civil servants is rather complex. That is what I was interested in establishing.



# AN APPROACH TO CULTURE, ARTS AND VALUES

Any attempt to reflect upon culture, artistic activity and social values in Indian society has to dwell upon the meaning of the word culture, and seek to define it. It is, of course, no easy task to capture the full significance of the word “culture” and the complex set of concepts, so elusive and yet so tangible, which underly it. Nevertheless, a definition of culture — even a tentative one, whose full significance can only be spelt out in the course of our survey — has to be attempted at the outset, in order to focus upon the comprehensive range of creative activities with which we are concerned; and in order also to highlight the prescriptive values and the institutional mechanisms which can stimulate and facilitate artistic endeavour of the highest quality.

Human beings in their social existence are involved in a diverse range of creative activities. Some of these activities relate to the fabrication of material values — we refer here to the production of goods of utility for physical use and consumption, which sustain life in its corporal form. Other activities pertain to the generation of cultural artefacts and configurations representing beauty, social ideals and moral values. Both the activities involve a range of interactions of man and nature mediated by society and technique. Activities of the latter variety provide the individual and the community with the poise necessary to sustain society and energize production activity, at the same time as they provide them with a sense of direction of the system of interactions of human beings with the universe as they contemplate their future.

The term culture, therefore, in its most comprehensive sense refers to diverse creative activities — to literature; to the visual and performing arts; and to various forms of artistic self-expression by the individual, specialist or lay, or by communities — which give a sense of purpose to human existence, at the same time as they provide the reflective poise and spiritual energy so essential to the maturing of the “good society” and to providing a rich life-style to the individual and the community, spanning both material and non-material activity. Thus defined, culture refers to a very wide range of activities in which individuals and communities are perpetually engaged in the course of

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Text of Chapter 2 of a Report of the Haksar Committee set up by the Government of India in 1988 to review the work of three National Akademies. This chapter was written by Shri PN Haksar.



their social existence. Our definition of culture quite consciously reaches out to individuals and communities as a whole. It does not differentiate between the specialist creator of culture and cultural artefacts and the lay citizen, who partly draws upon the creative world of the specialist, but partly also contributes to cultural production through his own creative efforts.

In our definition of culture we have already suggested that cultural activity is closely related to other social processes in society. Here, it would be appropriate to say a few words about our perception of the relationship between cultural creativity and such social processes. It would also be appropriate to suggest, at the very outset, that culture and cultural creativity, as we perceive it, are integral constituents of the totality of social activity within a community. It is culture which distinguishes human beings from other creatures in the process of natural evolution. [...]

The individual is involved in reflective and cultural activity at the same time as he is involved in the generation of material values. Yet, in modern societies, there is necessarily an allocation of specific roles and productive functions to different individuals. For this reason, some individuals become specialists in culture and cultural production, while others specialize in the generation of material goods. But in pre-industrial societies, which include large parts of our country even today, art and artisan, are often inseparable. It is then important to stress that the creative activity of artists, musicians and literary men reflects the urges and aspirations of the community, at the same time as their activity shapes these urges and aspirations. We would also like to stress that the "non-specialist" too is engaged in cultural activity; and we would take serious note of his endeavour and its results in dwelling upon the totality of the cultural production of a society. This separation in modern life is largely the result of the operation of the logic of mass production — of both material and cultural values — mediated by the market.

A few more observations are necessary before we examine the history of cultural creativity within Indian civilization and its legacy in our own times. We would, for instance, like to dissociate ourselves from any instrumental view of cultural, or from any notion of culture as external to that aggregate of creative activities which sustain human beings and shapes their values as social beings. We do so, not because we believe in culture for its own sake; or because we subscribe to the view that cultural activity has no relationship with other domains of social existence; or, indeed, with the domain of politics. Quite the contrary. For it is our firm belief that culture constitutes an integral part of the social and political

existence of human beings; and cultural activity interacts with the constituent part of the total round of activities in which a human being is engaged as a social, economic and political being. Such a relationship between culture and society on the one hand, and culture and politics on the other, however, does not lend itself to any ready use of culture for the promotion of social or political objectives. Indeed, *any rash political intervention into cultural production cannot but lead to disastrous consequences.*

On the occasion of the inauguration of the Sahitya Akademi, Dr Radhakrishnan, who was its Vice-chairman, had cautioned against what he described as “managed literature”. We should like to remind ourselves of what he said on that occasion:

... You remember the remark once made by Napoleon: I hear there are no poets in France today. What is the Minister of the Interior doing about it? The Minister of the Interior can subsidize versifiers but he cannot create poets. Poets cannot be made to order. If we are to have creative literature in our country and not a managed literature, it is essential that the Akademi should remain completely autonomous. I am glad to know that Maulana Saheb who just gave it the first push, recognizes that it will not be right for the government to interfere in the activities and administration of the Akademi...

The pursuit of cultural creativity, therefore, whether it pertains to literature or to the arts, or to other related domains, has to be seen as a self-reflexive activity, which, shapes its trajectory in a creative interaction with history. We would also like to advance the notion of individuals and communities being “existentially immersed” in cultural activity; and being functionally related to the artefacts of cultural production. Such a view of cultural and artistic creativity enables us to dwell upon the autonomy of cultural production, at the same time as we strive to create an environment within our country in which the creative activity of the specialist and the non-specialist alike can be harnessed into the generation of the “Good Society”.

While recognizing the inescapable necessity of the state paying the role of patron in the field of art and culture, we must not fail to emphasize, over and over again, the need for the exercise of extreme sensitiveness on the part of the cultural bureaucracy of the Akademies, the bureaucracies of Departments of Culture, whether at the Centre or in the States, and by our politicians. The kind of “sensitiveness” and “sensibility” we have in mind has been, perhaps, best articulated in a speech made by Jawarharlal Nehru, on the occasion of the inauguration

of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations. We quote below a relevant extract which we would respectfully, request everyone concerned with “management”, of art and culture to bear in mind:

...Does culture mean some inner growth in the man? Of course, it must. Does it mean the way he behaves to others? Certainly it must. Does it mean the capacity to understand the other person? I suppose so. Does it mean the capacity to make yourself understood by the other person? I suppose so. It means all that. A person who cannot understand another's viewpoint is to the extent limited in mind and culture, because nobody, perhaps, barring some very extraordinary human beings, can presume to have fullest knowledge and wisdom. The other party or the other group may also have some inkling of knowledge or wisdom or truth and if we shut our minds to that, then we not only deprive ourselves of it but we cultivate an attitude of mind which, I would say, is opposed to that of cultured man. The cultured mind, rooted in itself, should have its doors and windows open. It should have the capacity to understand the other's viewpoint fully even though it cannot always agree with it. The question of agreement or disagreement only arises when you understand a thing. Otherwise, it is blind negation which is not a cultured approach to any question...

At this juncture, we would like to elaborate a little more the relation between cultural production and artefacts of utility, to which we have already made a reference. It is recognized by the social critic, no less than by the historian, that the so-called “primitive”, pre-industrial societies often created cultural artefacts which were at one and the same time objects of artistic excellence and social utility. Indeed, it is a commentary upon development through mass-produced commodities, that it is only underdeveloped societies which refuse to differentiate between objects of utility and objects of aesthetic excellence. The two notions, that is, notions of utility and beauty are in such societies fused into one. It is difficult to locate a time in history when the fusion of such desirable qualities in cultural production yielded to a dichotomy between the artistic and the utilitarian. However, it would be valid to suggest that, with the industrial transformation of society and the rise of mass production of commodities, first in Europe and then elsewhere in the world, a polarity between aesthetic and functional artefacts came into existence which greatly impoverished society. Our notion of creative activity would promote the desirability of cultural production which is aesthetic and functional at the same time. We realize that the attempt to recapture lost innocence or to recreate the golden age of the past is a



romantic gesture which has the tendency to obscure our vision of the future. In that vision of our future, we shall have to ensure that the cultural life of the individual, no less than that of the community, should seek to relate aesthetic fulfilment to the everyday activities of life; at the same time encouragement should be held out to creative activity which locates both beauty and utility in the artefacts of cultural as well as material production.

No discourse about culture and the creative arts can be complete without mention of the vexed question of *high and low culture and the relationship between the two*. We would like to suggest that any theory of culture which commences with a differentiated view of the cultural activity of a society is, in our opinion, a flawed view of such activity. This is not to deny that, existentially speaking, human communities are differentiated into several social groups through economic and other factors. Nor do we deny that such differentiated communities generate varieties of culture which are addressed to closed groups rather than to society as a whole. Even while accepting the reality of cultural production designed for closed constituencies, it is, so we believe, not only desirable but absolutely necessary to look ahead to an era in history in which the generation and consumption of culture draws the citizens as a whole into its embrace. We set out such a radical view of cultural creative in the belief that by voicing this ideal before the artist, the musician, the literature and the social critic, among others, we are defining a prescriptive view which would influence creative endeavour no less than the citizen in his stance towards culture and the artefacts of culture.

Our conception of culture as creative activity addressed to the whole community rather than to a few privileged citizens does not, however, involve any surrender to vulgar and so-called “democratic” and populist forms of artistic endeavour. Indeed, our definition of culture as a self-reflexive activity — an activity fully conscious of social purpose and the central place of praxis in artistic endeavour — holds out the possibility, indeed, the desirability of innovative and transformative cultural activity as the highest aim of the individual engaged in the creative act. We do not suggest, in voicing such a view that it is possible to prescribe for individuals of genius, who reflect the deepest aspirations of the community at the same time as they hold out those values which provide the basis of the good society of the future. Nevertheless, the consciousness of such potentialities in our definition of culture and in the institutional as well as prescriptive forms we seek to devise as the backdrop of cultural activity will, so we believe, ensure that our vision of culture as a seminal social activity will influence both the citizen and the



creator of the artefacts of culture. It will also serve as a warning against falling prey to the laws of “mass culture” produced for the market like any other mass-produced consumer goods.

Any definition of culture and cultural activities in the abstract provides an appropriate setting for a brief review of the place occupied by artistic creativity in the past history of Indian civilization. The crystallization of this ancient civilization coincided in time with the development of settled agriculture, as the principal basis of human sustenance in the subcontinent. The cultural activity of Indian society, at this juncture, was reflected in a diverse range of creative endeavour whose derivatives still sustain the fabric of our society. Perhaps the richest resource of this civilization lay in a powerful religious and philosophical literature which reached out to the full range of social and moral activity pursued by humankind. It would be unnecessary to dwell at any length upon the content as well as the richness of this literature. Suffice it to mention here that it recognized no distinction between high and low culture, and drew within the compass of a mass compendium — the *Vedic Samhitas* and associated text — the moral and material concerns of all sections of society, in those centuries before the Christian era which witnessed the formation of Indian civilization.

While the *Vedas* and the texts associated with the *Vedas* focus upon the spiritual and social concerns of the elite and the popular classes within society at a formative stage, we possess in the literature of the Epics, cultural production of a later, slightly later, era. Unlike the former, which deal with the perennial concerns of human beings as embodied in spiritual reflection and mundane social activity, the Epics reflect the creative turmoil and the social ferment of a civilization in transition. Here, the challenges faced by a society undergoing a fundamental transformation — the appearance of agriculture as the principal means of generating material wealth; the growth of novel political and social institutions; the movement of new communities from Central Asia and beyond into the riverine plains of North India — are voiced through conflict and struggle between the old and the new in the sacred no less than in the profane worlds.

Even in a brief review of Indian civilization, we need to dwell upon the voices of the submerged classes, whose agony or aspirations were reflected inadequately, if they were reflected at all, in the literary and religious creativity of the priestly and warrior elite. For there is every reason to believe that, then as now, the wretched of our earth gave expression to their distress and their aspirations in visions of the good life which were articulated as eloquently as visions of the good life

articulated by the privileged orders. We refer here to the philosophical ideas represented by the generic term, the *Lokayata*, which represents world-views partly articulating the authentic voices of the underclasses; and partly also echoing the metaphysical reflections of cultural specialists who were deeply concerned about such classes. Finally, we touch here upon thought and practice, of varying levels of sophistication, and which refer as much to the reified reflection of human beings who had adopted the aesthetic lifestyle, as to the creative activity of peasants, artisans, pastoral folk and hunters, as they were drawn into mundane web of social existence.

Perhaps the most striking feature of the social, economic and religious activity of individuals and communities in pre-classical India was the fusion of the diverse facets of such activity into an organic unity. Philosophic discourse, religious practice and ritual observance, even at its most reified, touched directly upon issues of every-day significance. It drew, with unmistakable immediacy, upon productive activity, activities in the body and mind of human beings, including the maintenance of their health, no less than upon cultural and artistic activity. This was true even for the cultural production of the relatively privileged. Indeed, the distance which characterizes culture for the few as distinct from culture for the many, in modern societies, was conspicuous by its absence at this juncture. This was so even though the first crystallization of Indian civilization in a sub-continental polity, in the third century BC, held within its social fabric not only courtly cultural forms with their foreign interfaces, but also the vigorous life reflected in the literature of the *Prakrits* or in the cultural artefacts of the folk.

The social matrix of ancient Indian civilization provided the basis for its historical development in subsequent centuries. Here, a basic feature of our society needs to be emphasized because of its significance for forms of social activity. The formation of Indian society rests crucially upon the migration of folk communities from Central and West Asia and beyond, in successive waves, to the rich alluvial plains of the subcontinent. Each of these migrations carried along with it novel forms of material and spiritual culture, and these novel forms were successively integrated into the existing life-styles of the people of India. This constant flow of new cultural forms and resources conferred upon the people of the subcontinent a remarkable openness and resilience, at the same time as it enriched the range of artistic endeavour and creative activity within Indian society. (We are not unmindful of the fact that India too contributed towards the flow of cultural influences to Central and South East Asia. The spread of Buddhism, the great monument at

Angkorvat and the temples in Java and Bali are some of the well known examples of such influences).

In our brief review of the historical development of Indian culture, we are concerned no less with the literary and the artistic richness which Islam brought to India. This richness provided a great stimulus to metaphysical reflection and aesthetic activity and, indeed, changed the cultural face of Indian society. Central to the stimulus, which Islam provided to religious thought and cultural production in the medieval centuries, were the ideas of social brotherhood and spiritual equality which it held out to rich and poor and high and low within India. The Sufi variant of Islam is specially relevant to our recapitulation of the historical development of Indian culture. Sufi divines spoke to the common people peasants, artisans and followers of other mundane vocations — of the path — to spiritual realization as a path open to humanity as a whole, as it was drawn into cultural activity and material production.

The spiritual activity of the Sufi divines also reached out to the social and metaphysical world of Hinduism. Indeed, this interaction brought about a great transformation within Hindu society through the so-called Bhakti movement. The latter movement, as is well known held out the prospect of spiritual self-realization to those under-privileged classes within Hindu society which had earlier been denied such a right. Here we are concerned principally with the cultural manifestations of Sufism and Bhakti within Indian society. The most profound influence of these movements was the generation of a powerful devotional literature and music in the languages of the common folk. Indeed, the linguistic, literary and musical map of Indian society, as we know it today, was largely shaped through the creative activity of Sufi divines and the saints of the Bhakti movement. The various regional languages of modern India rest upon a rich corpus of texts created by such inspired men and women with the objective of holding out the values of spiritual dignity and self-realization to the common folk. The power of these texts and songs rest as much upon their lyrical beauty as upon the infusion of a new democratic and humanist ethos in spiritual discourse.

The cultural activity triggered off within Indian society in the medieval centuries had yet another characteristic which needs to be emphasized, particularly in the twentieth century, when the attempt to transform an ancient civilization into a modern nation-state is generating tensions which threaten to tear apart the very fabric of society. It need hardly be mentioned that the advocates of religious orthodoxy; namely the *Brahmins* and the *Ulema*, although they often advocated tolerance, held conflicting views of the sacred, no less than of the profane. In



contrast, Sufi divines and Bhakti saints had overlapping moral and humanistic visions and a mutual regard which communicated itself most effectively to the common folk who were drawn into their influence. Small wonder then that, even today, across a span of half a dozen centuries or more, the rural landscape is dotted with shrines and memorials of popular saints and holy men which command the allegiance of Hindus and Muslims to an equal measure; and whose memory is venerated to an equal extent by their followers formally ensconced in different religious world-views. This tradition of shared moral visions and humanist values became the cultural constituent of a composite culture which created music, poetry and other cultural forms of an unrivalled richness in the history of our civilization.

While cultural creativity in the medieval centuries reached out to new classes and communities within society, it would be a mistake to imagine that there existed no differentiation between rich and poor, or high and low, in the artistic activity of this period. Indeed, the distinction between courtly and popular activity is too well known to need any emphasis at this juncture. Nevertheless, the cultural polarities of the medieval centuries pale into insignificance before the polarities which characterized the passage of Indian society through the centuries marked by domination over the sub-continent by Great Britain.

With the colonial era, we enter into an altogether novel phase of the cultural history of India. The influence of imperialism upon the generation and outflow of wealth and upon political institutions, has been surveyed in many sensitive works of historiography. However, comprehensive critiques of the havoc wrought by imperialism upon artistic and cultural production have still to be attempted, except for the majestic individual efforts of a man like Tagore whose critique was also a reconstruction. Such reconstruction, of course, was pioneered by the monumental work of Ananda Coomaraswamy. We do not propose to embark upon this task in this report. Suffice it to mention here that the loss of control over our political and economic destiny, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, resulted in a profound disruption of the moral and cultural order within the subcontinent. To start with, the creative interaction between the centres of political and economic activity, on the one hand, and those of intellectual and cultural activity on the other, was brutally disrupted. Over and above this, new cleavages came into existence within the fabric of society, partly through explicit intellectual intervention and also as a by-product of the domination exercised by the new rulers of the land. Indeed, it is our belief that the intellectual, cultural and moral consequences of colonial domination were no less serious than its social, political and economic consequences. It is also our belief



that historians need to study this phenomenon much more intensively than they have done so far.

Yet, the colonial era was not marked exclusively by disruption and regression in the domain of cultural. The influx of new values in the nineteenth century, through the formal and informal institutions of education created by the British Government, is a phenomenon which is well recognized by scholars. That these values were designed to create a new intelligentsia within Indian society sympathetic to British imperialism is fully recognized. However, even imperialism cannot fully control the results of the social engineering which it unleashes in colonial societies. Thus the dissemination of novel ideas under British aegis was designed to create an intellectual climate sympathetic to British domination. Yet, it triggered off developments contrary to what the alien rulers of the subcontinent sought to achieve.

Indeed, the tensions which characterize the cultural transformation of India in the nineteenth century flow from the conflicting results of the steps taken by the British rulers. The most visible result of British initiatives was the emergence of a new elite which shaped for itself a culture that reached out to the Enlightenment, or to Romanticism, at the same time as it sought to re-mould its heritage in the light of such world views. Not surprisingly, those who focused upon the Enlightenment sought to restructure their world into a liberal society resting upon the market economy and upon popular democracy. While liberal values appealed to small segment of the colonial elite, the romantic reconstruction of the past exercised a much greater fascination for the majority of this social class. The reasons for this are easy to discern. The process of romantic reconstruction of India was the result of an interaction between a legitimate sense of pride in the ancient heritage and an acute awareness of the social and cultural challenges posed by imperialism. Moreover, such reconstruction did not call for basic transformations in the traditional consciousness of the community: rather it sought to harness the traditional idioms to the task of national mobilization against foreign rule. Often it sought to draw upon values which were deeply embedded within the popular psyche into a synthesis that also drew heavily upon the western world-view. For all these reasons, the colonial elite relied substantially upon romantic discourse as the basis of its attempt to reconstruct society, no less than as the basis of its creative activity in diverse domains of cultural production. This trend was also partly analogous to the European parallel of the Renaissance, which drew heavily upon Greek classical antiquity.

The alienation of the colonial elite from the folk, as a result of its

new consciousness, is too well known a theme to be discussed at any length in the present context. Suffice it to mention here that creative artists who drew inspiration from the Enlightenment were no less alienated than those who rested upon romantic discourse as the basis of their intellectual endeavour. Nevertheless, the Romantics were more advantageously placed in generating a culture likely to reach out to the popular classes within India. This was so because the romantic sensibility relied upon symbiotic notions and upon an agenda of cultural action with which the elite as well as the popular classes were thoroughly familiar. There are, of course, the striking exceptions like that of Tagore, who strode across this divide, synthesizing elements from both with his feet firmly planted on the native soil, profusely drawing upon the Bhakti and the sufi folk idiom as well as the *Upanishads*. The Tagore-Gandhi dialogue remains, till today, a shining hallmark of the unresolved issues of this discourse.

The cultural awakening of the colonial era is too well known to merit more than a passing reference in the present context. Thus the introduction of the printing press and the dissemination of new literary genres brought about seminal changes within the regional languages which, since the medieval centuries, had shaped the cultural personality of India. Painting, too constituted an integral part of this transformation: and the work of artists in Kerala, or, slightly later, in Bengal not only influenced social taste and sensibility, but also paved the way for the upsurge of romantic nationalism within the country. The stimulation of a novel interest in music, in this period, was no less striking than the resurgence in the literature and painting. As in earlier centuries, princely courts, aristocratic *durbars* and religious institutions continued to be the nodal points of musical activity. At the same time, *gharanas* and the *guru-shishya parampara* remained the basis of creativity in music within India. Nevertheless, a historically significant measure of creative experimentation outside these time-honoured domains was also visible at this juncture, of which again Tagore is the great milestone.

The cultural renaissance which swept across India during the colonial era made a substantial contribution to the nationalist awakening that liberated India from British rule in 1947.

Moreover, the decade and a half after 1947 was a period of intensive activity so far as the creation of new institutions for stimulating and sustaining artistic creativity and cultural production was concerned. Behind this stood persons like Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, who brought to bear upon such activity a profound understanding of culture and the arts; and a sensitive

appreciation of tradition as well as the new needs of the community. It was their hope, for instance, that the creativity of the new nation would manifest itself as much in music, dance, art and literature, as it would manifest itself in the growth of economic productivity, including the crafts which, combined utility and beauty. It was clear to Nehru and Azad that the old institutional forums for cultural creativity — the princely courts, aristocratic *durbars* and religious bodies — would no longer be in a position to extend the patronage which they had extended earlier to poets, dancers, musicians and other creative individuals in the community. At the same time, they were acutely aware of the limits and dangers of the market in regard to cultural creativity.

The consequent stance of the state, after 1947, is eloquently reflected in the cluster of cultural institutions which were established with the objective of breathing a new vitality, reflecting the ethos of liberated India, into artistic activity and cultural production. The National Museum, the Sahitya Akademi, the Sangeet Natak Akademi and the Lalit Kala Akademi are some of the institutions which were created at this juncture, in order to achieve such an objective. The role of these institutions, over and above the extension of sustenance, was to provide forums for debate and discussion between men and women engaged in creative activity, at the same time as they enable the artistic work of such individuals to reach out to their peers and to the intelligentsia as a whole. Indeed, the foundation of such institutions was informed with the belief that the results of cultural activity would shape for the community a sensibility which would guide and reflect India's entry into modernity, at the same time as it married the best in India's past to the best of what the contemporary world had to offer.

Both Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad defined on various occasions the role of the new cultural institutions in stimulating a novel phase of artistic activity, and also in providing the intelligentsia with the cultural resources necessary for disseminating the values of modernity among the people. While inaugurating the National Art Treasures Fund, in 1955, for instance, Nehru observed:

(How can we) make museums a vital part of the lives of our... boys and girls who can... be inspired by objects of art thus develop their own creative talents by looking at the great creations of the past? What I am anxious about is this: every child of India should see something of these artistic treasures, should understand something that has gone to build up India, should assimilate, even if in a small measure, the genius of India, which adapted to the modern conditions, should make the country grow.



The influence of Maulana Azad upon the new phase of cultural activity after 1947, was no less significant than that of Jawaharlal Nehru. Like Nehru, Azad too looked upon the cultural heritage of India as a social bond which had, across the centuries, woven together a tapestry of our civilization out of diverse and distinctive threads constituting our civilization, in the course of its historic evolution. Hence, the crucial importance which he attached to cultural activities in the totality of rather complex processes of nation-building in India. It was therefore, natural for Maulana Abul Kalam Azad to point out that "... one of the many questions that pressed for immediate attention after the achievements of independence... was that relating to the revival of cultural activities." Defining the role of the State in the area of art and culture, Maulana Azad stated:

During the last 150 years... (these activities did not receive) the attention or the support they needed from the state for their full development. It is true that there has been a renaissance in India since the middle of the nineteenth century, but this was due to the release of new forces in society and owed little to the state. That is why it was not as extensive or deep as it would have been if it had received the necessary state support... In a democratic regime, the arts can derive their sustenance only from the people, and the state, as the organized manifestation of the people's will, must, therefore, undertake its maintenance and development as one of its first responsibilities.

Mention should be made, at this point, of the pioneering work of Smt Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya in restoring to our crafts some of their old glory as well as in ensuring a future for them and thus fulfilling not merely an economic but also a cultural necessity of preserving durable aspects of our civilization, even in the midst of every complex and conflicting processes of change. For, the continued inseparability of art and the artisan not merely enriches our contemporary life, but also constitutes one of the bedrocks of the immanent forms of folk art and culture still embedded in our every-day folk life styles. The celebration of life, nature and work, represented in the great vitality and variety of folk art and culture, provides one of the most important bonds of community life all over our countryside, and also constitutes a significant part of the tradition with which the individual talent of the modern professional artist and cultural worker has to interact, to impart flesh and blood to his/her imagination.

We have referred, in the preceding paragraph, to the complex and conflicting processes of change. Just as the crafts are threatened by



the market laws of mass production and standardization, so are the pristine manifestations of folk art and culture seriously threatened by the invasion of commercialized “mass culture” currently being projected into every nook and corner of the country by the modern media. While manifestations of folk art and culture must not be considered as museum exhibits for satisfying exotic interests, at the same time their subordination to, and co-option by, the laws of commercial “mass culture” must be considered a threat against which it is necessary to provide suitable protective and supportive institutional frameworks, simply because they constitute one of the major live cultural resources of the country. It has to be acknowledged, however, that while significant strides have been made in restoring to our crafts some sort of institutional frameworks of survival, comparable on-going efforts for folk art and culture are not visible on a national scale, the activities of a number of institutes of tribal culture notwithstanding.

We do not, however, at this stage of our report, propose to evaluate the achievements or the shortcomings of artistic and cultural activity in India during the years after 1947. Nor do we intend to say much at this juncture, about the institutional framework devised in the nineteen-fifties to provide a stimulus to literature and to the visual as well as the performing arts within India. Suffice it to mention here that the achievement in this domain has been of an impressive nature, although, perhaps, the same cannot be claimed about folk art and culture, even as the recent emergence of a host of ethnic identities and tensions highlight the national urgency in this regard.

What we would like to stress, however, is the changing context in which such creative activity has been sustaining. We mentioned, at the very commencement of our review, the fact that the initial crystallization of Indian civilization, in the classical centuries, took place in the context of an agricultural revolution within the sub-continent. Over the past half a century, partly through the stimulus held out by the century, and partly also through the entrepreneurial activities of individuals and communities, we have witnessed the preliminary stages of a profound industrial transformation in our society. Such a transformation cannot but reach out to artistic activities and cultural production in the country. Indeed, we have emphasized earlier the organic relationship between material production and aesthetic activity. For this reason the contemporary social transformation of our society has shaped an entirely new sensibility for those engaged in artistic endeavour. The result of this has been significant achievement in the domain of culture, whether it pertains to literature, or to the visual and the performing arts, or to various forms of artistic activities by individuals or the community. At

the same time, this cultural production has been accomplished in a social context in which the mass media and the market have emerged as arbiters of taste and quality in aesthetic activity. Having separated art from the artisan, modern economies have converted art itself into a commodity, often mass-produced, like any other material goods.

The reference to the market as a decisive factor in shaping artistic creativity is one which calls for further reflection. We have mentioned earlier that the Akademis that were established in the first two decades after independence, were designed to sustain, through the provision of resources, novel and lofty cultural activity in the country. Nevertheless, it was the market rather than the patronage of the state which set the pace for cultural endeavour after 1947. Such a recognition of the market as primary influence upon artistic and cultural activity is by no means an uncritical endorsement of this state of affairs. Quite the contrary. In the generation of cultural values — more so than in the generation of material values — the market needs to be tamed and harnessed to serve the interest of man, nature and society. We say this because of our deep conviction that cultural and artistic creativity, as a self-reflexive activity, is an important constituent of the influences which shape the "good society" in harmony with nature. It is our belief that in cultural production, there must be free scope for bold innovation and daring experimentation by artists who bring to bear upon their work novel and lofty ideas and social concerns. There should also be no vulgar intrusion of the state or of "motivated" politics, in this domain. At the same time, those who seek to shape and articulate popular aspirations and the changing sensibility of the people through new art forms should receive support from the state, even when the market, choose to ignore their creative endeavour and drown it in the muddy waters of "mass culture", projected by the media.

It has been observed that poets and other creative artists are the true legislators of humanity. This observation is probably true in an almost profound sense. The state, or civic society as a whole, through institutions specially designed to facilitate creative activity, can only provide a congenial climate for the stimulation of culture. Above all, it remains the task of the inspired artist to invoke that spirit which reflects culture in the noblest forms, at the same time as it sustains human beings towards higher levels of aesthetic achievement and philosophical self-realization in the universal context of interaction between nature and the human being. But the laws of the commodity market of mass-produced "culture" must not be allowed to annihilate the artist, even, as the artist tries to wrestle with them. That must be one of the important desiderata of State support.

While explicitly recognizing the importance of the market in the production of goods and services, we must also accept that the state has a vital role in the field of culture. We shall, however, go grievously wrong if we fail to emphasize that the political and ideological predilections provided by the State can adversely affect its role. There has been a controversy in this regard in the USA. In this context, the very distinguished American art critic, Robert Hughes, recently laid bare the anatomy of frustration of art and culture in the *Time* magazine, of 14 August 1989. In an Essay titled *A Loony Parody of Cultural Democracy*, he passionately pleaded for a greater role for the American National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and simultaneously attacked "ideological" and "political" interventions. We quote below relevant extracts from that essay:

Senator Jesse Helms... has taken up the cudgels against the most distinguished and useful vehicle of patronage in American cultural life, the National Endowment for the Arts ... (He has) proposed a measure that would forbid the NEA to give money to promote, disseminate or produce anything 'obscene or indecent' or derogatory of 'the objects or beliefs of the adherents of a particular religion or non-religion' which, taken literally, comprises any image or belief of any kind, religious or secular...

What the amendment proposes is a loony parody of cultural democracy in which everyone becomes his or her own Cato the Censor. Clearly, Jesse Helms has no doubt that the NEA must be punished if it strays from what he fancies to be the centre line of American ethical beliefs. The truth is, of course, that no such line exists not in a society as vast, various and eclectic as the real America...

The extreme conservative view is that support of the contemporary arts is not the business of government. Never mind that quite a few people who were not exactly radicals, from Rameses II to Louis XIV and Pope Urban VIII, thought otherwise and thus endowed the world with parts of the Egypt, the Paris and the Rome we have today. New culture is optional slippery stuff, ambiguous in its meanings, uncertain in its returns. Away with it!...

'I have fundamental questions,' Helms grated, 'about why the Federal Government is supporting artists the taxpayers have refused to support in the market place.' But this was exactly what the NEA was created, in 1965, to do — and it was the wisest of decisions. Lots of admirable art does badly at first; its rewards to



the patron are not immediate and may never come. Hence the need for the NEA. It is there to help the self-realization of culture that is not immediately successful.

Corporate underwriting has produced some magnificent results for American libraries, museums, ballets, theatres and orchestras — for institutional culture, across the board. But today it is shrinking badly, and it requires a delicate balance with government funding to work well. Corporation's underwriting money comes out of their promotion budgets and — not unreasonably, since their goal is to make money — they want to be associated with popular, prestigious events... Our problem, despite conservative rant is too little government support for the arts, not too much. Even if we had a ministry of culture to parade the roosters, we would still need the NEA to look after the eggs.

In our committee's view those concerned, in one way or another, with the entire field of culture have to sensitize themselves to the fact that our country is involved in complex and even turbulent processes of our economic, political, social and cultural transformation. Factors of continuity are constantly in tussle with factors of change. We recognize the validity and creative role of the market forces in the area of production, material goods and services. That recognition does not blind us to the dire necessity of relating development processes to the critical need for culture and education. In our view, our biggest challenge lies in relating education, culture and development. The integral nexus between these has yet to be conceptualized. Our Departments of Culture and the Central Akademies as well as State Akademies have devoted hardly any attention to finding an answer to the nagging question: Are culture and education necessary preconditions to the development of a good society and for ensuring the quality of life, howsoever defined, of millions upon millions of our people? Must our response to the "hunger of the heart" and the "famine of the brain" await, in a sequential manner, the response to the minimum needs dictated by hunger of the body?

It is really quite extraordinary that after all the years of development experience, it is only now that the UNESCO has discovered the dire necessity of relating development to culture.

Recently, the Inter-Governmental Committee of the World Decade for Cultural Development set up a working group. The conclusions reached by that group need urgent consideration. And, even more urgent is to relate them to the concrete reality of changing India.



These conclusions are of seminal importance. We quote below some relevant portions:

The term 'cultural dimension of development'... is comprehensive and includes ways of living, belief and value system, crafts and skills as well as artistic creativity. It is the firm conviction of this Committee that the neglect of this dimension in development efforts has been mainly responsible for the irrelevance and non-assimilation of several good ideas in the past. The new development decade must overcome this deficiency... Recognition of the cultural personality of each of the peoples in the region is an indispensable requisite for every genuinely democratic integration process.

While many documents and declarations have recognized the importance of the cultural dimension in development and while the definition of development itself over the years has been broadened from the narrowly economic to include broader aspects of social factors, the cultural dimension is yet to be recognized, to be given its due place and importance. The group emphasizes the utmost necessity of fully exploring and incorporating the elements relating to cultural dimension in all policies, developmental strategies and programmes and projects, whether national or international, as it is strongly of the view that the failure to realize anticipated results in the past has very often been due to the neglect of this dimension. More importantly, development itself acquires full and proper meaning only when the cultural aspects are fully taken into account.

The dilemmas and perplexities of conceptualizing our development without a strong cultural component was sensitively articulated by that very distinguished German scholar, Max Weber, who was visited by strange premonitions in respect of the future. The questions he posed are of intense contemporary relevance. We therefore, reproduce what he wrote in his monumental work titled *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*:

No one knows who will live in this cage in the future, or whether at the end of this tremendous development entirely new prophets will arise or there will be a great rebirth of old ideas and ideals, or if neither, mechanized petrification, embellished with a sort of convulsive self-importance. For of the last stage of this cultural development, it might well be truly said: 'Specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart; this nullity imagines that it has attained a level of civilization never before achieved.'

In our attempt to delineate the profile of the word "culture", we may have, unwittingly, created the impression of a divide between culture and science. The Committee would not wish to commit such an error of perception. Science and culture are not two separate and distinctive expressions of human consciousness and human endeavour. Both are products of the creative expression of human minds which remain constantly open to truth. It is, therefore, not surprising that in his address at the opening of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, on 9 April 1950, Jwarharlal Nehru ends up by relating science to culture in the following words:

I should like to use another word — science. What is a scientific approach to life's problems? I suppose it is one of examining everything, of seeking truth by trial and error and, by experiment, of never saying that this must be so but trying to understand why it is so and, if one is convinced of it, of accepting it, of having the capacity to change one's notions the moment some other proof is forthcoming, of having an open mind, which tries to imbibe the truth wherever it is found. If that is culture, how far is it represented in the modern world and in the nations of today? Obviously, if it was represented more than it is, many of our problems, national and international, would be far easier to solve.

If the processes of development are to be seen as a complex interaction between culture, science and technology, education and institutions, then it is our view that culture has to be an important component of our planning processes. Just as economic development requires the development of supporting infrastructure, the cultural development too urgently requires planned and sustained development of infrastructure over a long period of time. We should, perhaps, explain what we mean by "infrastructure". We include in this infrastructure a planned programme for development of museums and galleries, theatres, rehearsal places, libraries and reading rooms, facilities for painters, sculptors and graphic artists and places where artists, writers, etc., could meet together and interact with one another. If this vision of development of infrastructure is a valid one, which we believe it is, there could then be optimal utilization of the resources of the Centre, the States, the Zonal Cultural Centres as well as of the corporate sectors in our country. Even the resources of municipalities and city corporations could be involved in the planned development of the cultural infrastructure.

The revolution in technology, more especially in the area of

communication, is bringing about profound changes. One of the results of this change is expressed in the oft-repeated phrase which describes the world as a Global Village. If our country must retain its cultural identity and distinctiveness, then it is imperative to evolve a conceptual framework for our electronic media. The Government of India had set up a Committee under the distinguished chairmanship of Dr P C Joshi to study the role played by our electronic media in the cultural life of our country. Our Committee did not have the advantage of seeing that Report. However, we cannot over-emphasize the critical importance of the emerging technologies in the field of information in affecting the cultural life of millions of people of our country. The mass electronic media have the potential to heighten our individual as well as collective sense and sensibilities, but they can equally be destructive. It was British poet, Louis McNiece, who foresaw the effect of excessive consumerism when he bemoaned "the excess sugar of our diabetic culture rooting the nerve of life and literature."

Before we end, we would like to affirm with all the emphasis at our command that the approach to culture in India must positively encourage regional diversity and not just tolerate it. No region or group should have the feeling of a threat of being swamped. There are no "majority" and "minority" cultures. The smallest unit has its contribution to make to the enrichment of the national sum total, and must be respected.

We devoutly hope that this would provide the backdrop against which we shall be contemplating the rich diversity of the cultural scene in our country and assessing the role played by the variety of institutions created with the object of enriching the cultural life of our people.

## VALUES, SOCIETY AND BRAIN DRAIN

What is meant by brain drain? Human being is distinct from the animals, The distinctive quality lies in humankind possessing a brain which is, structurally and functionally, different from those of animals. Logically, therefore, we could subsume within the category of "brain drain" the indentured labour which was taken to South Africa, East Africa, Fiji, Mauritius and British Guyana.

We could add also the entire community of Indians settled for many years in South East Asia, East Africa, West coast of the United States and in British Columbia in Canada. Finally, we must include the very large number of our countrymen who have gone in the post-independence years to Great Britain, USA, Canada, Australia, West Germany and to the countries in the Persian Gulf and North Africa. Obviously, we have not assembled here to consider how to reverse the process of drain of unskilled or skilled labour from our country, indeed, the remittances made by Indians are unabashedly recognized as an important source of augmenting our foreign exchange resources. In a way, therefore, their going away constitutes an approved export of skilled, semi-skilled or even unskilled manpower.

I might, in passing, briefly refer to sets of problems which arose from time to time in respect of our countrymen who have settled down in foreign lands. These arise, basically, from sudden changes in political circumstances. I am referring to the kind of problem which arose in respect of Indians in Uganda. Even earlier, there arose a problem of Indians settled in Burma. Observe the evolution of political trends in a country like Great Britain where conservation ultra, even among the Cambridge graduates, is all too visible and takes on racial colour. We must not rule out increasing racial tensions and its consequences to the Indian immigrants. There is a kind of racialism in France too. The growing unemployment problems in Western Europe is a breeding ground for racialism. We have to do some thinking about this and the effect it might have on Indians living in Africa, Western Europe and America. As I said, these observations are not directly related to the theme of brain drain which we are discussing.

I hope I have succeeded in narrowing down the categories of persons involved in "brain drain". I would restrict the phenomenon of brain drain to the emigration from India of highly qualified persons in the field of natural sciences, mathematics and statistics, doctors, surgeons and medical scientists, engineers, computer specialists, etc. I have not included those belonging to the social sciences largely because my



impression is that there does not appear to me any great demand for them except, of course, for economists.

But then I suppose India can live with some of our economists going away. It would be fascinating to observe how our contribution towards augmenting the number of resource persons in the discipline of Economics, together with the increasing number of Nobel Laureates who have made USA their laboratory, can restore to the American economy its élan and vitality.

The migrants who fall within the category of brain drain are mostly products of our IITs and other institutions set up to breed excellence. Two questions arise: First, can we do anything to prevent it? Second, do not these persons realize that they have been trained at the expense of poor people of India and that all the money spent on training them is wasted; do they totally lack any commitment to the country?

The second question warrants the conclusion that the problem being one of selfishness, greed and lack of any sense of commitment to the country of their birth, there is precious little one can do about it. It is then argued that there should be some way of getting back from such wretched Indians the money which India has spent in educating and training them, the advantages of which accrued to the affluent countries.

The suggestion made by the distinguished economist Jagdish Bhagwati,<sup>1</sup> which only a distinguished economist like him can make about taxation and an international agreement for taxation might be considered.

By all means, try it. My own hunch is that it is a non-starter. You cannot get the sovereign states, especially the United States, conscience stricken persons concerned to be your tax collector unless, of course, as it were, to tax themselves and remit the money monthly along with the welders and fitters of the Persian Gulf.

We might also consider the suggestion made that we set up in America itself, or Britain or France, institutions which will draw in our people there who will work essentially on Indian problems. There is a great deal of breast beating in India about the brain drain. Attempts are being made by well meaning people to tempt Indians back to India. First of all, such attempts create more problems than they can solve. Secondly, a person of eminence, especially in the field of natural sciences, who has settled abroad, would not find it easy to return to India. And finally, even those who come back find to their dismay that the environment in India is not conducive to their way of working. After

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1. *Taxing Brain Drain*, J N Bhagwati et al. North Holland, 1970.

spending some time in India, they tend to struggle back to the country to which they had migrated.

This brings me to consider the question: Why brain drain? There are obviously several causes of the phenomenon. The first cause is the dissonance between the training of the highly specialized persons and their absorption in the Indian "market". The problem is not merely of gainful employment, but employment and working in an environment where creativity is accorded highest respect in our society. The mismatch between the training given and the employment opportunity as well as the environment of work, even when the person gets the job he is trained for, causes not merely brain drain externally, but also causes internal brain drain. Examples of this are to be found all over the place. Highly qualified engineers get in to civil services; people who should be going into natural sciences become commerce graduates and chartered accountants; highly intelligent persons who could enrich science, technology and such academic disciplines as sociology, economics, etc., tend to become specialists in marketing management, advertising, etc. This sort of internal brain drain is no less serious a problem than the more dramatic brain drain of people going abroad. And even in respect of the latter category of people, we become more conscious of brain drain when someone like Khurana and Chandrasekhar become Noble Laureates. By saying this I mean to emphasize that there is no seriousness about the problem of brain drain and looking for the causes internal to India. Objective appraisal is certainly not our national trait. Appraisal of men and events is highly subjective.

After the passing away of Nehru, the environment for scientific work and social recognition of it does not exist in our country despite our politicians making speeches about the importance of science and technology. In the interface between science and technology, there are no defined goals which would pose a challenge to our creative people. There are wide disparities, totally unjustified, between the salaries paid to scientists and technologists and those who work in the management area, be they in government or in industry. The political and bureaucratic culture, under which the creative talent in India has to operate, is suffocating.

During the period of national struggle in India, men like C V Raman, Meghnad Saha, Satyen Bose, Krishnan, J C Ghosh, Birbal Sahni, S S Bhatnagar, P C Mahalanobis and others were looked upon as our national heroes.

I had the privilege of being taught by Meghnad Saha at Allahabad University who did not deem it beneath his dignity to teach or

lecture to B.Sc. first year students. So, did Neel Rattan Dhar; so did Dr Gorakh Prasad and so on. Dr Saha was not merely a Professor of Physics. In the national horizon of the thirties and the forties, he was a luminous star widely respected nationally.

There was another luminous start in the national horizon — C V Raman, a man possessed of extreme national pride. He did not go to England when being "England returned" stamped you with something extra, something special. His motivation was that "as a blackie I can do as good a science as anybody else". In fact, when C V Raman went to England, he had the temerity to buy himself a ticket for Sweden because he was quite certain that he will get the Nobel Prize for what came to be known as Raman Effect.

The interesting thing about C V Raman is that there was another person in India who could see that C V Raman was someone worth identifying, cultivating, extricating. That person was Ashutosh Mukherjee who saw that Raman was wasting his life in the Indian Audit and Accounts Services and persuaded him to give it up, and devote his time to science, which he did with such distinction and brilliance.

Another thing about C V Raman was that he was not the kind of person who said, "After me there is really nobody else". He sought immortality through his students. So, there was a band of students dedicated to C V Raman — Krishnan and others. C V Raman sought satisfaction in having fathered a generation of good physicists.

It is not so now. Something is missing in the post-independent period, more especially after Mr. Nehru left the scene. We do not now have a value system, systematically cultivated, which accords respect to intellectual excellence, nor have we consciously unfurled the flag of intellectual excellence by saying that those who plead for it are unmindful of the poor, hungry millions. Now, I think there is dishonesty in this criticism because the critics are themselves not sensitive to the poverty, misery and degradation of our vast multitudes.

Brain drain thus becomes a flight of intellectual capital seeking profitable investment. The disastrous results of the flight of intellectual capital are well documented in the history of northern and southern Europe. The persecution of Galileo by the church, the smuggling out of his major work to Northern Europe from Italy, the entire process of Renaissance as well as of subsequent Reformation led to the flowering of Northern Europe and the impoverishment of Southern Europe extending from Greece and Italy to Spain and Portugal. It is now a well established historical truth that without Renaissance and Reformation, Northern Europe and Great Britain could not have set into motion the



historical process of change from the Mediaeval to the Modern. Both Renaissance and Reformation produced the idea of progress and the Age of Reason. I am, of course, not unaware that the concepts of Progress as of Reason has had to be modified just as one had to modify the universe of Newton. The point, however, is that both the idea of progress and the sovereignty of Reason motivated human beings to great efforts.

If we look at the history of our country since independence and more particularly, after the exit of Nehru, we find total barrenness of purpose. The only motivating passion in our society is with money as a means of power which, in turn, becomes a means of producing more power. We do not even have the symbolism of the Nehru era when personal relations used to obtain between Jawaharlal Nehru, Homi Bhabha, Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar, P C Mahalanobis, D S Kothari and others. When the nexus between the political processes actually operating in India and the intellectual and ideological inputs into it are severed, brain drain, both internal and external, is inevitable. What is, however, even more alarming is that even among those who stay behind and possess qualities of excellence, there is no flowering, as it were, of the actual potentialities of our intellectual community of scientists and technologists.

Perhaps, the history of Renaissance and Reformation in Europe might appear too distant for us to evoke any reaction and response. We might then study, with profit, the more recent examples in Asia itself. Every Indian, in my view, ought to study very deeply how Japan set itself to transform the entire society after the Meiji Restoration in 1868. It will also be useful to study the role played by the Chinese intellectuals in stimulating processes of change in that ancient civilization through the movement known as 4 May Movement.

If one were to borrow the phraseology of economics, there should be a capital-output ratio, and in the intellectual-output ratio, it seems to me that the structures, the value systems, the procedures that we follow, the assessments and the system of assessments that we make are such that the capital-output ratio in the areas of intellectual capital is 1:10, which is infinite.

My own prescription for meeting the problem of brain drain is to plead with our politicians, bureaucrats and industrialists who are not mere traders, that they should do some introspection. The problem is not merely of brain drain; the problem has larger dimensions. It embraces the decay and degeneration of our university system, the constant and cruel interference of politicians into the affairs of the universities, the utter



disregard for the concept of excellence. Assessments of character and excellence are corroded by political or caste or other considerations. The autonomy of the university is totally non-existent. Each state runs universities as a department of the government. No wonder then that men and women of great talent do not come back to the university system which ought to be the repository of the intellectual capital of the country.

However, it is often made out that one can stay abroad and still work for one's country. It was said that somebody is doing research on Egyptian deserts sitting in America. There are such individuals. I can recall one example. When I was in London, I received an invitation from Birmingham, I was then the Acting High Commissioner. I was invited to Birmingham to open a garment factory, and the man who invited me signed himself as "S Wal". He informed me that the Mayor of Birmingham was also going to be there.

I was rather intrigued why a Mr Wal, an Englishman obviously, should invite the Indian High Commissioner to open the factory. The Lord Mayor of Birmingham could just as well do it. So, I made enquiries and it turned out that Mr S Wal was only "Mr Sabharwal". I turned up at Birmingham dutifully, met Mr. Sabharwal — a young man of 45. He was very proud to open this garment factory, making a variety of garments with ultra-modern machines.

I asked Mr Sabharwal: "What is your life story?" He replied: "Well, during the partition, my parents were killed; I got away and one of my distant relations was migrating from India and so I came along with him; I was then 14."

He found that in England garments made by hand had more value added than those made by machines. He married a Punjabi girl, bought her a sewing machine. She began making shirts. He began selling hand-made shirts. He made money and he employed more of these Punjabi girls; he got more sewing machines; he accumulated capital to build the modern garment factory at Birmingham. I asked him, "What is it that you want to do with your life, Mr Sabharwal?" He said: "Sir, that is my dilemma". But I am doing *Inquilab Zindabad* here. When I was a school boy in Punjab I used to hear this slogan *Inquilab Zindabad*". He asked his teacher what it really meant. His teacher asked him, "You know, my boy; we have the cow. Have you seen a cow? From the mouth, she takes food; from the udder we milk it. Now, my boy, at the moment the cow's mouth, is in India the udder is in England; so it feeds in India and they milk it in England." Mr Sabharwal said, "I want to reverse this process; that is my mission".

My only purpose in telling the story of Mr Sabharwal is to draw attention to a thing called human motivation. Of course the case in point relates to an individual. At that level there is infinite variety of motivations. However, what we are concerned with is the creation of appropriate motivation animating our society. The motivation of a feudal society are different from those obtaining in an industrial society. Carlyle promoted the concept of work being worship. He pleaded that instead of spending a lot of time in knowing oneself one would do better to know one's work and do it in the same spirit as one worships a god.

It might be asked: What has all this rigmarole got to do with the phenomenon of brain drain? The short answer is, everything. A society which does not place the highest value on knowledge and its acquisition inevitably alienates itself from creating, transmitting and applying knowledge. The alienation leads partly to the visible brain drain expressing itself as migration and the invisible brain drain as loss of morale and creativity among those who still stay behind in India. Both produce national loss, which may not be quantifiable, but is of immense proportion.

Over the period of years since our independence we have built a very large base of industry, both publicly owned and private. Despite some tax concessions given to these industries to carry out their R&D, neither the public sector nor the private engage in any systematic research and development in their respective areas. There are, of course, a few honourable exceptions more especially in the private sector. But these exceptions serve to lay bare the barrenness of the effort made. I do not have the time to elaborate on what could have been done and what could even now be done.

If we had set for ourselves the goal, as Homi Bhabha did with the support of Jawaharlal Nehru, to be self-reliant in the area of atomic energy and space and thus retain within India thousands of scientists and engineers, one can imagine what would have been the effect if the same self-reliant spirit had animated the major branches of our industry, e.g., energy, transport, ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy, automotive industry, chemical and fertilizer industry, drugs and pharmaceutical industry, etc. It would have meant definition of goals and concentration of energy and effort towards those well-defined goals for each branch of industry. Thousands of physicists, chemists, chemical and mechanical engineers, economists and social scientists, automobile engineers, etc., would have been found humming with activity.

I do not subscribe to the view that brain drain, both in its internal and external aspects, is related to the structure of the emoluments given

but is the direct consequence of purposelessness and alienation. I am, or course, not suggesting that the structure of emoluments obtaining at present, which is a kind of derived function of the emoluments of-bureaucrats, is a valid one. One needs to take a fresh look at the differentials which are unjust and arbitrary. In dealing with the phenomena of brain drain one cannot overlook the factors of social esteem and the consequent loss of dignity, together with lack of job satisfaction. All these are of cardinal importance.

What is to be done? Obviously, our political leaders and politicians and the government have to redefine for a timeframe of next 25 years what self-reliance would mean? This has to be done not as an exhortation but in terms of concrete and specific tasks relating to specific branches of industry and agriculture. If multinationals are required to play any role, we need to define carefully in what areas and in what precise way they can make their contribution to self-reliance. These tasks can only be performed by our political leadership and by government. However, this does not absolve the leaders of our scientific community from shirking their responsibility in articulating the reasons for their dissatisfaction which are quite palpable and are growing. The organized body of scientists and engineers must speak out about their frustrations. They must articulate the kind of environment they need for carrying on their work. They must equally look into the way the knowledge of industry is organized in India both within the university system and in the various other institutions. The scientific community in India owes this to itself and to the country. We must also review critically the effect of the umbilical cord which connects various IITs and other institutions to those who helped initially to set them up. It might be of interest to ascertain the brain drain from various IITs and correlate it to the country with which an IIT is connected. It may also be worthwhile to investigate the role which multinationals play in the process of brain drain in India.

I hope I have, at least, succeeded in establishing the fact that the phenomenon of brain drain is a complex one. Certainly, the international inducements operate and play a part. But our own society as it is, taken together with the dominant value system, economic structure and political morality play a more decisive role. With our university system in a state of advanced decay, there is really no container within which the intellectual capital can grow. The university system is in ruins because we still do not know the answer to the simple question: What are our universities for? In Japan, there would be no two answers to the question. In that country, the universities are meant to be the depository of the intellectual capital for the country. It is regrettable that the effect of

politics on our university systems, including those run by the central government, is sclerotic for cultivating knowledge and doing basic research in the natural and social sciences. If I may be forgiven, I should like to advertise the law I discovered after an empirical study of a number of universities which is to the effect that the *intensity of politics in the academic campuses of India is directly proportional to the obsolescence of the academic plus a factor of K*. I might explain, K represents local variable: In Bihar, for instance, it would have a very high magnitude.

Somewhere in the course of this talk, I said that those involved in pondering over the phenomenon of brain drain have to do a lot of introspection, which would involve a critical analysis of the real driving forces of our society, which, to me, at any rate, are more in consonance with our being mere consumers of science and technology than its producers.



# EDUCATION IN INDIA : SOME REFLECTIONS

The Director of the Maharashtra Institute of Technology, Professor Karad, the Worshipful Mayor of Pune, my good friends Shri D L Shah, Professor Chitnis, Shri Mohan Dharia, my honoured scientist-friend, Dr Mashalkar, the Commissioner of Pune, the distinguished audience and my young friends.

It is around 7:00 p.m. in the month of August, to be precise, 7 August 1992; the sun has already set on this day, and I believe there is darkness outside. In my life, I have always had a fascination for sunsets. A friend of mine once asked me the reason for my fascination. I said that a sunset always meant to me a promise of a dawn. It is a promise of a dawn that one has to sustain by faith, hope and reason through the darkness of the night. So, there will be a tomorrow. Some poet once said:

Each day is a fresh beginning,  
Each morn is a world made new.

It is with that sort of feeling that we have to wake up tomorrow on 8 August, one day before that great event in our history called the Quit India Movement.

This evening is one moment in, if I may say so, a fairly long stretch of my life, which gives me a measure of happiness. "Why"? You might ask. Am I just being ritual or formal? No! I intently heard the passion-laden voice of Professor Karad, and I am always moved by the passion in human beings rather than their intelligence. In this connection, something comes to my mind. It is a story told by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, in whose honour my distinguished friend, the polymer scientist, Professor Mashalkar, has been honoured today. Seeing a procession of Buddhist monks passing by him, Jawaharlal Nehru closely examined their faces. He then went on to reflect: "I looked at their tranquil faces and envied them." He wished that he too had that tranquillity. And then, he looked inside himself and found vast turbulence. He then came to the conclusion that there was no "safe haven" for him.

This world of today, tomorrow, the day after, is not going to be a world full of safe havens. It is going to be a world of turbulence. But we can cope with it only in the measure we try to understand the processes in being, rather than merely contemplate men and events. That is why I have enormous objection to my very dear friends who try to introduce me as a great person. If you ask me to introduce myself, I will do so in utmost

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Lecture delivered at Tilak Samarak Mandir, Pune on 7 August 1992.

humility and truthfulness — I regard myself as a witness to the human drama on this earth. Once in a while in this drama, I was privileged to occupy front seats. I do not know whether you have seen old Parsi theatre or not. But, if you occupy front seats, there is one disadvantage: you can see the paint and grease on the faces of the actors and actresses. So, I have seen with intense fascination this drama, the actors on the stage — presidents, prime ministers, foreign ministers, this minister, that minister, etc, all over the world. It is in my capacity as a person who is continuously watching sunsets and waiting for the dawn, and for the sun to rise, watching the human drama on this earth, that I feel a sense of deep involvement, commitment, passion if you like, for this [part of] mother earth which we call our India, our *Bharat*, our *Hindustan*. It may be madness, but I have wandered all over the surface of this earth from Peking to Washington, to Buenos Aires, to Santiago de Chile, to Tokyo and I come back to this land of ours and I contemplate, I constantly contemplate, the vast panorama of our history and civilization. I would submit to you for your consideration that there is one simple message of our civilization, which we first must ourselves grasp, and in the measure we grasp it, we might have something for the tortured world of today. After all, this is no ordinary land. In industry, we might talk today of export-led growth, but in matters affecting the spirit, we have always been exporters. Out of this mother earth, through the eastern part of this country, you have to travel right from Orissa's coast to Thailand or Indonesia or further through Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam right upto China, which is also a great civilization, where our country is a contributor to the processes of civilization. That central message of our civilization is contained in one word, and one word alone, which is called pluralism.

Unlike the Judaeo-Christian civilization, which elaborated a fantastic model of both monotheism and a dichotomy between man and nature — so that for the European world it is conquest of nature — in our tradition, it is Man and Nature. There is identification of Self with the entire Creation:

*Atmavat Sarva Bhuteshu,*

*Yas Pashyati Sah Panditah.*

This stands against the Judaeo-Christian tradition of man versus nature which, as Western civilization advanced, got identified with conquest of Nature. Therefore, they set off to conquer. This in time created the western science and technology. Such a science and technology, when used for satisfaction of ever increasing consumer demands within the framework of acquisitiveness and, with reckless disregard of human habitat and environments, created in time the sort of

crisis, of which the forthcoming Earth Summit in Brazil is a painful symbol.

It seems to me that we in India are slavishly aping the West and thus planning our self-destruction. I am saying this because any design for structuring our social system, economic system, educational system, value system in India — not in Europe, China, Japan but in India — must take into account the heritage from the past, which is of value in the world of conflicts and tensions which we find today. And that heritage is pluralism. Pluralism does not mean homogenization. The USA is a great country no doubt, the land of Lincoln and Jefferson, but their social doctrine was that of homogenization, of the melting pot. It was like a crucible in a chemical laboratory — you had a Bunsen burner at high temperature. Everybody melted in it. But the historical experience is that human diversity cannot be destroyed by the process of homogenization. Only in our country we have the proud privilege of not only accepting diversity, but living in the midst of it. The USA is not prepared to jettison the melting pot theory and accept the inescapable necessity for cultural pluralism. There was the comfortable little Western Europe which is coming apart and there is no mental paradigm to accept the French, Germans, Swedes, Norwegians, Danes, Spanish, Portuguese, Italians, Greeks, Czechs, Hungarians, Bulgarians, Bosnians, Croatians, Serbians, etc. But here in our country, I do not feel alien just because you speak Marathi and I speak Hindi. We are accustomed to pluralism. When Shankaracharya in the eighth century set out on his great voyage of discovery of the rest of *Bharat* upto the Himalayas, he did not feel as if he was going with a passport and visa to alien lands. He was part of the same cultural heritage.

This Trans-Indus heritage is still there, and some day we will rediscover it, including Pakistan and Bangladesh. I will tell you a little story. When I went to Rawalpindi after the Shimla conference, Mr Bhutto took great care of me, put me in a large suite in the Intercontinental Hotel, with two or three servants to look after me. One day the person who was looking after me came to speak to me. And, let me now switch over to Urdu, which was the language used, and which has a flavour of its own — not so good as Marathi, I will tell you to flatter you, but still has a flavour of its own!

*"Huzoor, main aaj shaam kya lavoon aapke liye, khane ke liye?"*

*"Bhai, main Pakistan aaya hoon, kuch Pakistani pakwan khilao."*

*He started scratching his head. "Huzoor kya kaha?"*

*"Suna nahin? Pakistan aaya hoon, Pakistani khana khana chahta hoon. Pakistani pakwan khilao."*



Then he looked about to see whether the other person was around who probably was an intelligence agent. He was not there. "*Hazoor, kya pakwan? Wo hi to hai.*"

I said, "*Yeh kaise ho sakta hai? Pakistan hai, Pakistani pakwan hona chahiye.*"

"*Nahin, huzoor, wohi hai. Wohi pulao, wohi rogan josh, wohi to hai.*"

"*Aap aate kahan se ho?*"

"*Main Saharanpur, UP se aata hoon, aur Pakistani hoon.*"

You may, my friends, laugh, but I tell you that it is an immense tragedy, and the Pakistani politicians and the Pakistani armed forces, which constitute the power structure in that country, are hell bent on destroying the country. Because they refuse to accept the genius of the Trans-Indus civilization — pluralism. The Sindhis, Baluchis, Bengalis, Pathans, have a right to their own distinctive identity, and once you accept that identity, they will transcend that into a larger identity.

Please, my young friends, I was very moved by your speeches. It is really a wonderful thing, in this day and age, that there should be men like Professor Karad, with deep passion in his belly, thinking passionately about things. I am moved by passions and I must pay a tribute to the passionate nobility in the two speeches made by the students of MIT this evening.

In trying to consider the processes of transformation of India, of an ancient civilization in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, we have to understand the processes. We are a civilization born on the banks of the river, and based on agriculture. We created many institutions, some positive, some very negative. One of the worst heritages of Indian civilization, which affects us today, is the discovery of idea of purity and pollution, on which was erected the structure of *Brahmanvad*. And I say so because I am a *Brahmin* myself: if you want to know my *gotra*, I will tell you: purity and pollution — that means some work is pure, some work is impure. Whereas in the world of today, all work is sacred. It took a long time, for instance, in Great Britain, for a person like Carlyle, to proclaim that work was worship. But this division of *Brahmin, Vaishya, Sudra* etc., Affects our psyche, which was further aggravated by British imperial system, which wanted to create *Babus* which we still are.

Let me briefly refer to a bit of history which created *Babus*. There was a great debate between Macaulay and others as to what kind of education should be fostered for the Indian natives. There were those who said that India has a great culture, which should be taken into account. Macaulay said that Indians were barbarians and had no culture



or civilization worth talking about. India was a Tower of Babel. Britain was, as they proclaimed, on a civilizing mission in India. Macaulay sought through his educational system to create within India a class of people meant to serve and promote Britain's mission in India. An education system was set up in which learning by rote was practised. Emphasis was on reading, writing and arithmetic. That was all.

Education and culture are an integrated system which makes us human beings and distinguish us from animal kingdom. [...]

It is again through interaction of education and culture that we acquire the value system and cultivate those elements in our human nature which lay emphasis on love, compassion, justice, capacity to give, sanctity of knowledge and wisdom.

The educational system, as it has quantitatively grown in our country since our Independence, is mere expansion of Macaulay's philosophy. It is singularly drained of all its cultural components. Also, our politicians and educationists have totally failed to grasp the imperatives of our country thrown up in the middle of twentieth century into a vortex of processes of transformation. One of the most critical elements of this transformation is in the realm of political structuring of India.

We have not understood that although we have a great and glorious civilization and heritage, the concept of a nation-state is not part of that heritage. We have no precedents for creating, what we have put down in our Constitution, a democratic and secular Republic of India in which each citizen, men and women, would enjoy fundamental rights. We had *Rajas*, and we used to say, *Yatha Raja, tatha Praja*. It is nothing to be ashamed of.

[...]

The emergence of the modern nation-state is a new phenomenon. No doubt, during our national movement, when the British used to say, "You cannot be a nation, you are so diverse — peoples, languages and so on", we used to reply: "No, we shall be and we will be!"

We do not understand that in the making of a modern nation-state, how critical is the role of three basic things in this twentieth century. The first and foremost is pluralism. Pluralism means we have to acknowledge what is called unity in diversity. That does not mean diversity will vanish. It will not vanish, and I hope that it will not vanish. The whole richness of pattern of the Indian tapestry consists of its diversity. You travel from one part to another, diverse heritage, culture, dance, drama, music, folklore, etc. Even Ramayana when translated into Kannada sounds different from the Ramayana translated by Tulsidas.

There are a hundred Kannada versions of Ramayana. In one lovely version, there is the usual dialogue between Ram and Sita. Ram tells Sita that she is very delicate, that she cannot bear going to *vanvas*, that she will be put to trouble. And what does Sita reply? She says: "What are you saying, my dear? I have read other Ramayanas, and in all of them, Sita always accompanies Ram. So, I am going to come with you!"

This is the pluralism of which I am talking. India is a garden, a *gulistan*, a *bagh* a tapestry. Can there be a beautiful tapestry with one colour? Can there be a beautiful garden with one flower?

The world of today is ready for the message of pluralism. The only means of human survival with its rich variety intact in the midst of technological globalization is pluralist humanism. We in India take pride in the fact that our remote ancestors had a vision of this entire earth being one *Kutumba* (*Vasudaiva Kutumbakam*). We, the *Kutumbam*, will be at each other's throats unless we respect pluralism. The West has to respect pluralism; we in India have to respect pluralism.

This means a new concept of federalism. I know when we gained independence, there was this trauma of partition, trauma of past British conquest of India. As one Britisher said, "India was peeled skin by skin like an onion." You cannot skin a tiger paw-by-paw, but you can skin an onion leaf-by-leaf, and it was done from 1556 to 1757, which was the year of Battle of Plassey.

We must safeguard this pluralistic tradition, which means first and foremost the whole pattern of education, of which the design remains Macaulay's, has to be radically changed. This is fundamental. We can go into details later on.

I would submit that within this Maucalay tradition, we have since Independence, created some institutions like the IIT, CSIR as well as ICSSR, etc., and yet, our entire educational system, from university downwards including the new institutions we have created, are infected by the virus of Macaulay. The entire educational system, including scientific, technological as well as sociological designs, relate itself in an integral fashion with the problems of designing and creating a new India in this twentieth century and after.

## JAWAHARLAL NEHRU AND THE SCIENTIFIC TEMPER

How things came to be as they are? Why things happen? Can something happen without any cause? Is the Earth flat or round? Is our Earth the center of the Universe? All these questions and many more are the product of human consciousness reacting to Nature and Society. As against this, there is the belief expressed in two separate Hindi verses. One of this verse says that whatever Lord Rama has willed would happen. It is no use arguing about things. The other verse says that whoever the King might be, my destiny would not change and that I shall remain a slave. There are other kinds of assertions made. One of our Shankaracharyas for instance declared that the practice of *Sati* is sanctioned by our scriptures. In Islam, the *Fatwa* cannot be challenged. There was always the assertion about papal insolubility.

The first lot of questions are rooted in what is meant by the scientific temper informing and fertilizing human consciousness. Jawaharlal Nehru deeply and passionately believed that if our ancient society and civilization is to change, and face the challenges of the world of today and tomorrow, the citizens of the Republic of India must be stimulated and inspired by scientific temper.

The scientific temper about which Nehru spoke so often does not, in any way, contradict spiritual life of human beings. But then, what is meant by spiritual life?

We human beings, are naturally endowed with conflicting feelings of love and hate, of compassion and cruelty, of self-regard and care for others, of tolerance and intolerance, of arrogance, prejudice and humaneness, of human solidarity, conflict of war and peace and of pleasure and pain. Every new born baby expresses pleasure and pain. The spirituality in human beings consists in the constant endeavour to transcend the negative element, both of our individual nature and society. The great founders of the organized religions today — the Buddha, Jesus, and Prophet Mohammad — were responding to the human conditions of misery, sickness, death, conflicts. And the dominant message of each was rooted in love, compassion and solidarity among human beings.

Scientific temper leads us to investigate the relationship between social, economic and political structures and the material and ethical values of love, compassion, tolerance, human solidarity, etc.

Long years of involvement in our country's freedom struggle,



which kept Nehru behind the prison bars for as many as 11 years, led him to contemplate both our history, our traditions, our values and our inherited social and economic structures as well as the value systems. He also asked questions about the inter-relationship between our own struggle for freedom and the world-wide movement for emancipation, both political, economical and spiritual.

Since history is a response to the question, viz., how things came to be as they are, Jawaharlal Nehru set about discovering India for himself and for us. This tour was an exercise stimulated by scientific temper. He also investigated the nature of society in which concepts of social justice and equality can prevail over greed and exploitation. This led him to create a vision of India in which growth of wealth and its distribution could take place optimally by interaction between the process of planning and the operation of market forces which he described as "Mixed Economy."

Interacting with Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru synthesized the imperatives of science and the imperatives of the moral and ethical universe. Herein probably lies the reason why Mahatma Gandhi thought and felt that Jawaharlal Nehru would probably be the best person to mould our country's future.

Scientific temper leads us to understand the complex connections and interactions between the processes of social, economic, political and cultural transformations as well as the interactions between these processes and the knowledge expressed through science and technology. Jawaharlal Nehru's name will forever be associated in the history of our country in consciously promoting the development of science and technology in our country and relating them to the problems of poverty and hunger, both of our body and mind in our country.

Jawaharlal Nehru also applied the scientific temper in his endeavour to understand the nature of the world emerging after the Second World War. No other political leader or statesman understood with such remarkable insight as Nehru did that the nuclear age demanded a radical revision of the theory and practice of the conduct of foreign policy, which had been dominated for several centuries by the concept of Balance of Power which explicitly recognized the legitimacy of war as an instrument of policy. He therefore defined India's national interest in such a manner that it was in consonance with the historic necessity of transcending the divisions of the world in terms of power blocs. The policy of non-alignment was thus born. Today, it commands world-wide attention. And not merely attention, but a way out of the



dilemmas and perplexities posed by the atom bomb. To Jawaharlal Nehru, non-alignment was neither a doctrine nor a dogma. It was and remains a methodology for analysing the true nature of the problems of our contemporary world.

Any research into Jawaharlal Nehru's thought processes would be incomplete without a reference to a word which is least understood in our country. That word is "Secular". He alone understood that in a country like ours where its inhabitants have been divided not only by institutionalized religions, but by language, culture and social structures, the creation of a democratic republic, inspired by equality and a concept of common citizenship, cannot be achieved without our state being secular and our minds getting increasingly secularized.

What does this word "secular" really mean? It means that political, social, economic problems as well as the problems of building Indian consciousness which transcends caste, religion, linguistic and other divides cannot be achieved without explicit recognition that the entire nation-building and development processes in India have to be analyzed and understood in terms of the knowledge we possess both in the areas of social and natural sciences. Importing religious scriptures into these domains as a means of solving our problems is guaranteed to destroy both the unity as well as the diversity of our country.

Jawaharlal Nehru has now been dead for nearly a quarter of a century. But his broad conceptual framework is intensely relevant today. Scientific temper is in a state of siege. Religious revivalism and parochialism is striking at the very roots of the foundation of our "Democratic" and "Secular Republic". Our political processes increasingly pay homage to all the divisive elements in our society, whether expressed in the name of caste or creed or religion or language. There is, therefore, an urgent need for a new movement for India's renaissance which is inspired by the essence of Jawaharlal Nehru's and Mahatma Gandhi's interacting universe of spirituality and scientific temper. Without such a movement, we just cannot hope to face the challenges of the fast changing world of today and tomorrow. The creation of such a movement is the only way to observe the Centenary of Nehru's birth. To do anything else would be an act of assassination. Having assassinated Mahatma Gandhi, must we become assassins of Jawaharlal Nehru?

Reminding ourselves of the assassination in history, one cannot fail to recall the assassination of Indira Gandhi on 31 October 1984. This assassination was followed by the most brutal and the most shameful massacre in the very capital city of India of innocent men and women of

Sikh religion. Who so ever indulged in it or organized it, contradicted the imperatives of the values implicit both in scientific temper and in spirituality. A word went round that Sikhs had assassinated Indira Gandhi. An exercise of scientific temper would have raised the question whether that was true. No one stopped to ask himself or herself the question: If Sikhs assassinated Indira Gandhi, was Mahatma Gandhi assassinated by the Hindus or was Abraham Lincoln assassinated by Christians? Among the followers of every religious beliefs are to be found men and women of bestiality. It is this negative, destructive and cruel aspect of human nature which is the real assassin. The new Indian renaissance to which I have referred earlier, has to combat the bestiality in our minds. Unless this is done in time, our country would remain beleaguered and besieged within and fail to rise to its potential greatness, so that we the citizens of India can become the true inheritors of the dreams dreamt by our poets and our creative writers and thinkers.

To the generation of the readers of this article to whom Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru are mere names, I could perhaps excite their curiosity by quoting from some of the reflections of Jawaharlal Nehru. I should like to convey something of the flavours of his mind in the following quotation from his book titled *Discovery of India*:

The real problems for me remain problems of individual and social life, of harmonious living, of a proper balancing of an individual's inner and outer life, of an adjustment of the relations between individuals and between groups, of a continuous becoming something better and higher, of social development, the ceaseless adventure of man. In the solution of these problems the way of observation and precise knowledge and deliberate reasoning, according to the method of science, must be followed. This method may not always be applicable in our quest of truth, for art and poetry and certain psychic experiences seem to belong to a different order of things and to elude the objective methods of science. Let us, therefore, not rule out intuition and other methods of sensing truth and reality. They are necessary even for the purposes of science. But always we must hold to our anchor of precise knowledge tested by reason.... we must beware of losing ourselves in a sea of speculation unconnected with the day-to-day problems of life and the needs of men and women. A living philosophy must answer the problems of today.

# MANAGEMENT OF R & D INSTITUTIONS

Dr Valluri, Dr Podoinitsin, Professor A Rahman, our distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I must begin with a confession, and I do so not with a view to indulging in contrived humility, but to give expression to my feelings about the relevance of making speeches in gatherings of human beings from different habitats in the name of promoting understanding and co-operation. I am wondering where these lead us all.

If one were to go by the speeches made about relevance of science and technology to our respective national endeavours, by now we would have resolved all the problems or at any rate posed the right problem. If one follows the great and conscientious efforts made by the family of man which is now called the UN, of UNCTAD sponsored seminars and get-togethers like this and the tomes which are published, by now the world ought to be quite different.

Listening to Dr Valluri's speech, I felt that here was a mind and heart articulating some of the essential elements of what we have gathered here to consider. After the allegorical posing of some essential questions by Professor Rahman, I have precious little to add, more so, because I am not a practising scientist, much less a technologist in the strict sense of the term. I have been brought up for more than a quarter of century in the art of science administration. But I am diffident to bring my knowledge of that to this area, because I know we are dealing with a very sensitive and creative aspect of human activity which does not easily lend itself to known disciplines of management or the frameworks of management. I have another responsibility namely, to head the Planning Commission of India which seeks to plan an orderly transformation of our ancient society, which has a continuous history of thousands of years.

Therefore, my mind keeps wandering away from this particular audience, this auditorium and this campus and it wanders out beyond the city of Bangalore, to the State of Karnataka whose Chief Secretary is present. Probably the uppermost thing in his mind would be inadequacy of resources allotted to Karnataka in the Fifth Five Year Plan for the development of his State, for which he is responsible. The names of a host of Chief Secretaries of 22 States keep popping up in my mind. I have just been through the painful experience of meeting them all during annual plan discussions and they might have returned home dissatisfied

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Inaugural address at the UNESCO seminar on "Management of R&D Institutions" in Bangalore on 1 August 1976.



with the resources available which they feel ought to be there, if they are to meet the needs of their people. India is a sum total of 22 States and eight Union Territories. Having spent a good bit of my life, in diplomatic service, I am intensely aware that beyond the world of Karnataka and Andhra and the 22 states, the world of India, there is the wider world, this little earth of ours, a segment of which has gathered here, stretching from Iran to Afghanistan, to Pakistan to Nepal, Bangladesh, Thailand, PAPUA New Guinea Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and so on. Scientists must know something about the kind of world in which we live, instead of a prolonged age of innocence.

The trouble I always have with my scientist friends is that while It is part of scientific methodology to isolate a phenomenon under observation and to assume certain variables to be constant, the world, the real world, the real time and the real work in which we live nothing is constant. There is a vast interaction taking place. Varieties of interaction in this latter quarter of the twentieth century have assumed acuteness of their own. In the time and circumstances in which we live, there is an acuteness of perception of the proverbial man in the street, a perception heightening consciousness of his rights and laws, not necessarily of his obligations. But it is a bad workman, who quarrels with his tools. We have to deal with human beings as they are and not as we wish them to be. Moreover, they do not live alone, they live in societies structured one way or another. It is this society, pulsating and tangible, historically specific, not a society of sociologists' abstraction, but one evolving historically through time and space where the past, present and future constitute a continuum, that all creative scientists have to work and the technologists have to work. I feel hopeless when I am confronted with the argument that scientific activity can afford to go on in isolation of the society and the world. Your distinguished President, Dr Valluri had to say and I quote:

Otherwise scientific R&D institutions quickly tend to take up fashionable research, imitating what is going on elsewhere rather than concern themselves with problems of national relevance. R & D institutions can then quickly become luxuries which we can ill afford. Making It a chapter in a document dealing with national planning is not likely to make science the tool for national growth. The planning for science and technology must be integrated with planning as a whole.

Fortunately for us planning is no longer a dirty word. We have travelled far from Adam Smith to John Maynard Keynes and from Keynes to Samuelson, all the rest of the breed of economists who have no doubt made a mess of the world we live in. I say this because I head an



essentially economic think-tank of the Planning Commission. Today even among classical adherents of market economy, there are people who talk of planning.

Even, the multinationals plan, but they plan for themselves and not for meeting the priority needs of millions and millions of human beings. I place the needs no higher than the needs of food, of health, of education, of shelter and of civilized cultural existence. Economists, politicians and scientists who are chasing the will of the wisp of catching up with the affluent societies will come to grief, because, we are witnessing, the end of an epoch where all the theories of consumer sovereignty and market being the sole determinant of priorities is hopelessly outdated and enmeshed in difficulties. We have a situation, where the world Nobel Laureates and economists have no answer to the question, how is it for the first time we have a combination of inflation with unemployment?

If I can venture an explanation, it arises out of the nature of human beings. This phenomenon exists, because the curve of human expectations, of what they desire out of life, is always higher and there is a hiatus between that curve and the curve of performance of socio-economic and political systems. Human expectation, whether stimulated by political leaders or otherwise, are far in excess of their consciousness of their own obligations and awareness of what the economy can at a given time and place perform. I wanted to mention these things, because, this is a necessary framework within which the problems you are to consider must be faced. This would also help us to avoid two kinds of feelings — one feeling generated by people who come to make speeches — our problems will be solved because we have a magician in our midst called scientist and technologist. We have given him money and we have built bricks and mortars of a beautiful looking laboratory and he will bring you prosperity. Having made that speech there is no further responsibility in the establishment of linkage of that speech with concrete programmes, policies, integration with the planning process. When that laboratory and that science and that technology do not deliver goods, then comes the second stage of complaint that our scientists and technologists have let us down; they write research papers and do not produce anything and that some scientists and technologists aid and abet this situation by really being more interested in publishing papers in the western world than even doing simple things which are relevant to their own respective economies. So a mood of disenchantment develops with scientists and technologists. Fortunately, in our country we have an escapist route. We can take to the Himalayas and forests and talk of

spiritualism. In India too there is disenchantment, the scientists and technologists have let us down.

It is frequently asked what is done for the society, for the poor man, for the man in the street, for the agriculturist, the agricultural labour, etc. These questions are raised not because anybody is interested in them, but it is a good argument to beat you with and you should be aware of it.

Management of Research and Development is easier said than done. It cannot be done unless, first of all you understand what this world is evolving to. It certainly cannot be done unless you realize even in a normative sense, a vision of your society, what kind of India you want to build, what kind of Malaysia you want to build, what kind of Nepal you want to build, and Bangladesh, Pakistan, Thailand of what kind? Do you have a vision of your society? A valid vision backed by programmes, policies, and organizations and given that valid vision our linkages are established between society, social evolution, economic evolution, political evolution into which science and technology can be fitted. Science and technology are not independent variables. They are interacting systems and what especially can science or technology do is heavily dependent and contingent upon the social science, and the soil on which it operates. History has shown such dramatic examples. We must be aware of history.

I hope every scientist and technologist knows a bit of history, at least history of his own science if nothing else. You have the example in the thirties a very civilized country like Germany, Germany of Beethoven, of Heine, of Heissenberg, of Schopenhoeur, of Einstein, of Hegel giving itself over to a period of irrationality. Have you examined why it happened? How is it that immediately after the end of the First World War, a very civilized country called Italy, which has its intellectual history linked from Leonardo Da Vinci to Fermi, gave itself over to a period of irrationality? Unless these questions are understood well, you may not be able to manage R&D for long.

It is my duty as Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission of India, intensely absorbed with the very gnawing problems of transforming this country and seeking to fit into this the process of transformation of science and technology — and here again I should lay emphasis on what Dr. Valluri says, “it is a very vulgar view if you take that there is such a thing as technology in a country where basic sciences can be ignored.” It would be a desert land, a waste land of TS Eliot if such a thing were to happen. From where do you get your technologists, where do you get your physicists and chemists, your engineers if basic

sciences are neglected? Therefore, to optimize the results of science and technology [we are], inevitably driven to consider the linkage with education. The linkage of education is determined on the other hand by the economic and social goals you pursue, or society pursues. You may as a scientist establish all the linkages, only then you will get somewhere near proper policies. Otherwise, it is all empty words. Scientists must beware that they are more vulnerable than anybody else because intellectuals are more vulnerable than any body else. They have sensitive souls.

In my country we have a vast amount of experience, both of our mistakes and also of our achievements. Mistakes in setting up institutions without goals, achievements of setting up institutions directed towards goals, experience of having right institutions and right choice of right men. Science grows as a result of the choice of right men and management of science requires that intuitive perception of choice of right men, or groups of men. We have experience of that and we have over a period of time, despite many unresolved problems of our society and our economy, an accumulation of knowledge of experience in wide and varied areas of science and wide and varied areas of technology.

You have gathered together here from this part of Asia which is the inheritor of very old civilization of which all of us are justly proud, in its time a creator of many civilizations, many religions. In fact almost all the religions of the world were born in the soil of Asia and interpreted in its truest sense. Spirituality which underlies religion and science are not in conflict despite the Episcopal story of Laplace Lagrange meeting Napoleon.

I hope I have said enough to broadly delineate the areas you have to traverse and the areas which you might for the time being regard as constant, that is the socio-economic and political, to be better able to see your own specific role. Remember that assumption of making a variable constant, is only an assumption. Then, I am sure your discussions would be fruitful, creative. I thank you very much for giving this opportunity for self-expression.



## RETREAT FROM REASON

Dr Rangnekar, Nihar Babu, Bhabatosh Babu, my friend, Boudhayan, and friends, please do believe me when I say that I have never been in my life so overawed, as I am this evening, when I stand here and try to formulate my ideas, and to speak to you. Nihar Babu's and Bhabatosh Babu's presence itself is very daunting. I began to wonder if I have really any credential to speak here, or to say something which might be remotely construed as something new or even startling. If I may say so in great respect that I know what Nihar Babu said about me and what my friend, Rangnekar, said, they said that out of affection and extreme civilized tolerance, and that they would classify me as an intellectual. Rangnekar even wishes to deny me my legitimacy by saying that I am not a bureaucrat. Because, frankly, if I have done anything in my life, it is through being a bureaucrat. One does not like to disown one's past. May be we are making distinction between bureaucracy as a system and bureaucrats, because even with bureaucracy you have random phenomenon of various kinds of mutants in it, and I have seen in the system of Indian bureaucracy men of my generation and even of younger generation deeply endowed with sensibility and sensitiveness and cheer and concern.

One has to earn a living and I had to earn a living, too, and I thought I might do it through being a government servant. It was quite an excellent target of mine that I became one. But, I do not wish to disown my colleagues, my dedicated colleagues and others who worked with me. And, therefore, I would wish to speak under the flag of that mystique bureaucracy, if I may say so. Frankly, Mr Chairman, having been a bureaucrat and having been largely a backroom boy, the idea of standing up and speaking does not come naturally to me. And even if it did come naturally to me by great effort or will, I have a feeling when I go round the country today that words which have evocative power are all hollow, even the evocative words as emotion fall flat. Patriotism has no meaning, scientific temper mocks at us, reason, rationality, secularism appear so many slogans. Someone here said just now when you will need making a fresh attempt at writing a universal history of mankind, (you will find) that the path traversed by humanity is littered with bodies of dying gods. So, it seems that the journey that this nation of ours has made during the 33 years is littered with slogans embodying at one time the thought of our heart's aspirations but now look like dying bodies lying miserably.

Speech delivered at the Birla Industrial and Technological Museum, Calcutta on 13 December 1980.



Secularism mocks at us, as I said, so the scientific temper. I should try to reason things out, to subject a phenomenon to the discipline of facts and laws of causality. We are mocked at. I remember, four/five years ago, arguing something in the presence of the then Prime Minister, and Foreign Minister, Sardar Swaran Singh, a certain proposition, and after having heard me, Sardar Swaran Singh said: "That is how you educated people think."

The innuendo was clear enough and since I have always been somewhat irreverent, I reminded very gently my friend, Sardar Swaran Singh, that he should remember that he was occupying a chair as a Foreign Minister, which at one time was occupied by a self-conscious thinker called Jawaharlal Nehru. At least that could silence him. I hope, he might have thought about it. There was a problem of foreign policy that was not to be dealt with by village bumpkins that need not be dealt with here. They required sophistication and understanding and application and intelligence. Be that as it may, speaking as our saying has to be per force by words which have lost their savour, I am always reminded of an apocryphal story about that famous historical earthquake in Lisbon in 1765. I think it was a great city, it was a beautiful city — and it was by Voltaire...

A Pangloss was in the city at that time. As the city was shaking and shivering under the impact of natural calamity, at that precise moment, there was a man going round the streets of Lisbon selling anti-earthquake pills. And when someone stopped him and said, "Do you really think it will do the trick?" He countered the question by saying, "if not, tell me what is the alternative?" And so, my speech this evening, whatever I have to say, is in this spirit. It may not be of earthquakes and turbulences which abound in our country and the world at large, but I suppose, there is no "alternative". But, to say whatever you feel deeply about, and hopefully, to be able to convey, if not an argument then at least a mood, this evening. Well, Mr Chairman, reason, rationality, scientific temper are human endowments. Of that there can be no two opinions. If one surveys our long history as humanity, which in civilizational terms is about 10,000 years old and, in terms of our long evolution, is about 3,000 million years old, then I think, if we have survived, and we are what we are today, the history has survived. As a German historian said, history is concerned with answering the question. What that question was? How did it happen? How did it uniquely happen? How we are here, still thinking, still trying to struggle, still trying to reason out, still trying to collect facts, data and correlate them, link them with some hypothesis? How should I conceive of our destiny as a

people, of the country? Then we went to that faculty of human beings which we call reason, rationality and scientific temper.

It was reason, it may not be conceptualized, as we know conceptualization, called scientific temper. Then break it into its constituent parts: Its influence on daily life, daily living and struggle, the interaction between social and natural environment, even the simple process in which man engaged in the Paleolithic age, or Neolithic age of chiseling things or little instruments out of stones, or in bronze age or in iron age or whatever developed or later civilization as known as Babylonian, Egyptian, Byzantine, and so on or Roman or Greece. Then, in so far as they grew, it was through the application of this faculty which we possess as human beings of reason, of rationality, of scientific temper. In fact, if you take the Aryan civilization, Greco-Roman civilization, Hindu civilization, Judaic, Christian civilization, Buddhist civilization, these civilizations are integrated systems. Gradually, over a period of time and through human experience, a phenomenon takes place. Out of these total systems where a thing called religion does not exist by itself, but is a part of a system, large areas of human experience get segregated and they become what is called secularized. And thus, it was that education at one stage got secularized. Thus, it was that music got secularized. Thus, it was that dancing got secularized. Thus, it was that economics as a discipline emerged as a secular subject to reason, rationality and scientific temper, investigation, experimentation, deductions, and, thus, it is that whole areas of science, philosophy got secularized. And to understand this process of secularization, without understanding this process, we shall always be thinking of an interaction between a throwback from the past of what is now described as religion entering into each of the systems and distorting our thinking.

Now, look at our country. We are a self-confessed secular state. We use this English word, and how have we proceeded to translate it? We say secularism for India means a state, merely a state, which is tolerant towards all religions. There is no reference here and no understanding at all that secularism has nothing to do with any doctrine of tolerance, you might as a civilized person enunciate or propagate, that secularism is a process; and that is why despite 33 years of profession of secularism, of state being secular, all the symbols which we use, in terms of which we desire national integration, are an anti-thesis of secularism. Our conception of relationship between Hindus and Muslims, which is a hangover of Mahatma Gandhi's era, merely say it is a problem of tolerance — if you could only be tolerant. Yet, the source of intolerance are not genetic. In fact, ethics, society are heavily dependent for their very survival not on selfishness but on altruism. That which enlarges

altruism, that which enlarges human solidarity is ethical, even if it be backed by religion. That is why we say that if the object in India is to create a state or a society which is egalitarian, then it is simply unethical to have divisions between castes, creed and community. Yet, our experience of 33 years is — and this applies, if I may say so in great respect to the parties to all political parties across the entire spectrum called vibgyor, violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange and red — of total unreason and irrational conception, both of secularism and of integrative forces of India of today or tomorrow.

It is not as if reason has been in retreat in recent years. The present seeming retreat of reason in my humble opinion, can be traced to the days when we had the tryst with destiny. We never examined and to this day we have not examined either the meaning of reason or meaning of secularism or the meaning of scientific temper and what its social, political and educational and cultural imperatives are. Usually, in any given society, human beings endowed with such faculties as reason, scientific temper and rationality, or in their tussle between altruism and selfishness, things are transmitted through what is called an educational process. The educational process may be confined to your parents, your family and then you come to the wider world, to your school, to your life or to wherever you live. It is a continuous lifelong process of what might be called programming of the human mind, of programming of human attitudes. Look at our educational system. Has there been any conscious effort all these 33 years in which we have considerably settled down and set out what value system shall our educational system convey? The answer is our educational system today is merely a vastly enlarged version of Macaulay's system, and you know what the value system of Macaulay was meant to create. And this we transmit year after year and generation after generation, and so the retreat from reason. I should like to say, it is a bit of vulgarization of politics to seek to correlate the state of affairs as it exists today to the kidney function of the cerebral capacity of passing politicians.

Mr Morarji Desai, told a scientist of the family of the CSIR, "I say you gentlemen, what do you think you are? Do you think you have great deal of knowledge? Nonsense, you have nothing you only have very little knowledge, because, ultimately, what is science? Because science ultimately is truth and Truth is God". Q.E.D? Mrs Indira Gandhi's version is more sophisticated, but the effect is the same. She has the sensitivity not to insult you frontally, and she says, "I have great regards for you gentlemen, the scientists, I have assembled you together and I want to talk to you, I want to learn from you, but remember this poor country has made great investment on you and you must deliver the goods". As if the



whole problem of transformation of this ancient society — and we are an ancient society — is a simple function of investments in scientists and ultimately a simple function of a number called the community of scientists which we have counted as 2.5 million. After all, anybody familiar with the most elementary human history ought to know that whether reason, rationality and science are optimally utilized in a given society is a very complex phenomenon; and that is why if you plot the graph of growth of science and technology and correlate it to social, political and economic structures obtaining at that time, you do not get in any given society, a continuous upward curve of optimizing the results of science. I have here with me a very interesting — I have written it out in my hand — perception of the benefits of science, the perception of Macaulay. He wrote on Francis Bacon — look at the lyricism. This was in the middle of the nineteenth century:

Science has lengthened life, it has mitigated pain, it has extinguished diseases, it has increased the fertility of soil, it has given new securities to the mariners, it has furnished new arms to the warriors, it has spanned great rivers and estuaries with bridges of form unknown to our fathers, it has guided the thunderbolt innocuously from heaven to earth, it has lighted up the night into the splendour of the day, it has extended the range of the human vision, it has multiplied the power of human muscle, it has accelerated motion, it has annihilated distance, which has facilitated intercourse, correspondence all [...illegible...] offices, of dispatch of business, it has enabled man to descend to the depth of the sea, soar into air, to penetrate securely into the recesses of the earth, to traverse the land in cars, the ocean in ships which run 10 knots against the wind.

These are some of the fruits. And it is the first fruit for its philosophic authority, the philosophy which never rests, which has never attained, which is never perfect, which is a law of progress.

Within a short space of time even in British history, this lyricism vanished. Even in the eighteenth, the middle of the nineteenth century, the great universities in Oxford and Cambridge stoutly set their face against the intrusion of this vulgar thing called "Science". And so, science grew outside the portals of Oxford and Cambridge. New universities had to be established and later on in London, the Imperial College of Science, and the people who attended the lectures on science and technology were not gentlemen, they were artisans. So, it grew outside the system and yet, though Britain was the leader of Industrial Revolution and the London Exhibition was a splendour, it was very soon overtaken



by the Paris Exhibition and where Paris left off, it was Bismarck of Germany which took it up and by 1868 in Japan, at the time of Meiji Restoration. The Japanese decided to train in science and technology. The Japanese did it under what is called the community organized under authority. The British did it in a community organized under will and you can see the distortions of the two systems including the one organized under pressure and, so, the social structure within which, in the womb of which, science and technology respond. One had a lyrical and optimistic view, a view of progress as a linear thing, and goes on and uninterrupted as in Macaulay's view.

It was at this time that a great Professor Douray, who wrote a book called *Idea of Progress*. It was part of the nineteenth century assumption that humanity is destined to progress inexorably. It was part of that assumption that in 1911 that very great intellectual called Norman Angell wrote a book in which he had satisfied himself that all reasonable men should avoid war, and that war had already become out of date. In contrast to Norman Angell's book, there was a book by Fromm Von Hardy of Germany, who, a year before, wrote a book which was completed in 1913, saying that the war that Germany had to wage was almost inevitable. Who proved to be right? F V Hardy, and not Norman Angell. Because, Norman Angell was an idealist belonging to a social, cultural system, an imperial system which was satisfied with what they had. Germany of 1913 represented a dissatisfied system called organized capitalism, or whatever you may call it. And, so, there was a war. And the idea of progress was shattered in the First World War. And we had then, instead of the lyricism of Macaulay, a pronouncement by the Bishop of Britain in 1927, when he was addressing the British Association for Advancement of Science. What did he say: Therefore, I even suggest that sum of human happiness outside the scientific circles would not necessarily be reduced to ashes if for 10 years every physical and chemical laboratory is closed, and the patient and resourceful energy in them transferred to recovering the lost faculty of getting on together and finding the formula of making both ends meet in the scale now still unknown to us.

And, so, we in our contemporary times hear these echoes. One must look deeply, not merely at actors who appear on the stage in dignified form — Prime Minister, President, Ministers, and so on — one must look at the script which they play. The script was that this country somehow, without going into the fundamentals of anything, would, solve its economic, social and cultural and political problems by three *Mantras*. The first *Mantra*, a secular state, which I have endeavoured to show, that we have today a total lack of understanding of even the concept called

“secular”. And in the secular state, run within the framework of a parliamentary democracy, a mixed economy in which there was a slight variant, in accordance with, such as, Industrial Policy Resolution, that public sector over a period of time would reveal a secular trend of having commanding heights. And, finally, in good measure, science and technology will take care of our having missed the first Industrial Revolution, and thereby telescope centuries of backwardness through this magical wand of science and technology, and very soon we shall have [...illegible...] Here who shall tell us why despite vast investment and possessing the third largest manpower in this world, our scientific community has failed us, just as we bureaucrats are often accused that we have not successfully implemented the plans which our masters made. Although, in my view, I submit, in no society it is the function of bureaucracy to change the society. Bureaucracy’s systemic function is to preserve, to conserve, to carry on from precedent to precedent. Even in revolutionary Russia, which, in course of time, has produced a bureaucracy called “apparatchik”, which people say is an impediment to its further change and growth. And, China now, is discovering the virtues of bureaucracy as against continuous upheavals in the name of “Cultural Revolution”.

So, there is “Retreat from Reason” and rationality all along the line, and confusion deliberately spread. And, unless we are very clear, we shall all be victims of it. Because, just as the price of liberty is supposed to be eternal vigilance, the price of progress, howsoever defined, is through the operation of this human faculty of reasoning and arguing and applying scientific temper, and therefore, its product called science and technology to social engineering, cultural engineering and political engineering. We have to fight for it. Somebody has to fight for it. Because, the given power structure in India, as it has grown — and this is not due to wickedness— It has grown normally and naturally. A power structure which has not shared the perspective of my friend, Rangnekar. They are not depressed. If you go to any Five Star hotel, you do not find depression, they are in a state of excitement, of discovering all their muscle, all their power, their influence, and so on; they are all agog, whether in the rural or in the urban areas. But this *Inquilab*, which we have created, of well-being and property is askew with time, revolution and unfolding of reason and scientific temper. And my scientist friend, Tarun Ghose, this evening, if he can master such an intricate thing as science, surely, he should be able to understand politics, not in order to become a politician, nor to understand the anatomy of our society within which we are functioning; it is for no other reason than the reason of altruism, for self-preservation also, self-rewarding reason also, because,

you will not then suffer from frustration. As Hegel said freedom consists of recognizing necessity and the necessity is that this is the structure, and you have to change it. Then, you must understand it.

And, so, time and again, in human history, and it has just now occurred to me that this phenomenon of a structure of a society, being askew, being a structure dissonant with the dictates of reason, dictates of scientific temper and dictates of rationality, is as old as human history. It was Meritosys (Meletus?) who accused Socrates and Exubrant (sic) of being atheists. Look at the distant past. This phenomenon repeats itself. The Roman intellectuals faced that kind of situation we are in, which we say is decadence all over, loss of morals and manners. If you read a daily routine of powerful people in the last days of the Roman Empire, they enjoyed themselves, they began their morning, they went to the public baths, they had massage, and so on and so forth, and between nine to three there was a siesta. Siesta means sixth, six hours, that is the origin of the word; it is a Roman word. And they enjoyed themselves. When the intellectuals were a little horrified, they were told that they could get out. And so, they gave up Greek Philosophy, they gave up Lucretius, and they began to worship mumbo jumbo. This has happened time and again. Marconi, in spite of being such a brilliant scientist, ended up by joining the Fascist Party. I do not want to say that my friend, Bhagabantam is a similar predicament, but he has joined a very great regenerating organization called "Sat Sai Baba".

So, it is not that scientists themselves are not exempt from these laws. [It depends on] the social situation of the scientists and the scientific situation of the scientists — one does not follow from the other. Because the social situation depends upon his comprehension of social forces in operation. He may be very rational in his laboratory, but when he comes outside there is nothing. It is now no secret that when we were trying to explore with our atomic device, and we put it down in mother earth of Rajasthan and sent our scientist down to connect the fuse, which he was supposed to do in 10 minutes, and he would not come out even in 30 minutes, and we were all concerned; and, ultimately, when he came out, he said, he wanted to be sure that he had put the "tilak" on the bomb. So, retreat from reason and retreat from science is not merely shared by vulgar politicians, and it would not be so. So, let us not go away with self-righteousness that we are all right. It is these persons, MLAs, MPs and Ministers, and so on, because, again, as Bernal says, that this, relates to a period of decay and decline of Britain, and that decline continues unchecked and unabated. He observed, when he wrote in one of his monumental books on *Social Function of Science*, in the mid-thirties, he says, mysticism and abandonment of rational thought is not only a sign of



popular or political disquiet, it penetrates far into a structure of science itself.

The working scientists may repudiate it as firmly as ever. But, scientific theories, particularly the metaphysical and mystical theories which touch on the universe at large for the nature of life itself, which had been pushed out of court in eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, are attempting to win their way back into scientific acceptance. So, we have today *Chhandyogya Upanishada*, and at the same time, you can hire a man, who, through *Mrityunjoy Yagya* can give you immortality, which *Yama* could not give to *Nachiketa*. So, even if we were to seek our inspiration from the *Upanishadic* past, look at the decadence. Time and again it has happened in human affairs. Renaissance, which had its origin in Italy, persecuted Galileo, and his work *Discourse* had to be smuggled out, and the Renaissance went to naught. And, so, Italy was impoverished. We had Germany, a country of Hegel and Kant and Karl Marx, a country of Baach, a country of musicians and philosophers, a country which, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, made large contributions to science and technology, suddenly, in 1929 and 1930 gave itself over to irrationality. It would not matter, but, look at the suffering through which the German people went, even if one ignores for the time being that the Jews are expendable. Look at Italy, a country of Renaissance, Galileo, Leonardo Da Vinci, gives itself over to a buffoon called Mussolini. And, it is no accident that in that great monumental work, which Karl Marx wrote called *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, comments that on the universal history of mankind, men appear and reappear first as heroes and then as farce. And so, Mr Chairman, one can perhaps, go on analysing the anatomy of our frustrations today; but we must not vulgarize politics, in terms of merely persons, but see politics as a process, of its structure, its function, its history, structure and functions. I have never understood my sociologist friends who have set up separate schools called Historical School, Structural School and Functional School. I am not aware of any structure which does not have any function, which does not have any history but, general academics must make a living, and they do so by division of labour and, so, all problems, be it economic, be it social, be it cultural.

We discussed for three days a little microcosm, called Calcutta. We discussed its cultural problems, we discussed its transport, housing problems and what comes out? It is not that we lacked ideas, but those ideas and hypotheses on which we operate are dissonant. Such is the structure which exists, and it is the structure which is the impediment, and it will not go away by incantation, even by correctly quoting Karl Marx. The idea that the validity of a proposition can be established by



appropriate quotation, belongs to the era of decay of Indian civilization and not to the era of the rise of Indian civilization. One of the tragedies of Indian history is that the social movement obviously wanting to reform the system tried to get their legitimacy from the system itself. So long as your idea is derived from *Vedas*, you cannot challenge the system frontally. That is why you have a residue of a great movement called *Brahmo Samaj*, which merely reflects itself in dress or probably in the possession of a piano; or we have *Prarthana Samaj* which has altogether vanished; or you have *Arya Samaj* or you have Kabir and Guru Nanak, which were refreshing at that time — Bhakti Movement. In this part of this century, when 20 years remain for the century to end, when in the world at large vast upheavals are going on in ideas, in science and technology, if this nation has to survive then those of us at any rate who swear by any liberal principle of mixed economy, welfare state, we cannot move an inch forward unless we generate a movement in this country which opts out of the organized political thought processes which have compromised so much with our existing structure. That very act of compromise prevents any fresh thinking.

Well, sir, we had our day, and I have no intimation of immortality. Having read *Chhandyogya Upanishada*, I know what *Yama* would tell me, that it does not lie within his powers to give me immortality; but I do have a feeling which I should express, that is, this country could generate what we call renaissance, which was appropriate for that time, nothing short of a similar renaissance would serve our purpose. A simple thing like bio-gas plants for the poor and the wretched on the earth will come up against intractable problems, not technological problems. And so, I have a feeling that unless we have the courage to assert the truth as we see it against the apostolic church, whichever that church might be — under the banner or Red Flag, Blue Flag or White Flag — time will pass and history will probably record a judgement that with a long, arduous struggle in the middle of the twentieth century India became free, but, by the end of the century it was already in a morass. That would be a terrible indictment of our generation, and, therefore, with great respect and in great humility, I will say that Calcutta could probably assume its thinking cap, which it has seemingly thrown away in pursuit of short-term gains by sacrificing long-term interest of this country of ours. Bengal had always visions of India. Bengal today is only fighting the corrosiveness of *Amra Bangali*, and I dare say that *Amra Bangali* is much more powerful and emotional than half-baked leftism. Thank you.

## DISCIPLINE OF FACTS

At present, there is a total confusion of ideas and a debasement of public debate in our country. There is a kind of dissonance between the reality in our country and it tends to be reflected in debates and discussions on political, economic and scientific matters.

What is, therefore, one to do in such a situation, except to step aside and to see if there is any pattern in this development, both within our country and without, because the world outside seems to be in no less a disarray (though this ought to give us no satisfaction)? The disarray in the world is not an invitation to be in disarray ourselves. Disarray in the world is a challenge to this country from the snow-bound Himalayas to the graceful shores of Kerala; to a great country with its past glory and contribution to human civilization; to its citizens to measure up to the magnitude and majesty of India.

Look at one side — the natural endowments of our country in its total sense. Look at the skills which are there; at the capacity of dedicated young men and women, no more than 25 to 28 years, who, after study were able to generate enormous competence in the fields of space, atomic energy and in other sciences and technologies. There is a vast accumulation of competence and capacity to design, to organize, to build almost anything that we need. And here is the mother earth of India capable of producing an enormous variety from its bowels, from its resources and industry. And here lies the central problem of Indian economy. The central problem, as we look to the last quarter of the century and as we face the twenty-first century, is: can we as a nation solve a simple problem of growing enough wheat for ourselves and to export; growing enough rice for ourselves and to export; growing enough groundnuts to export oil and its products and other oil-seeds? No doubt we have had a green revolution. There have been dramatic increases in the output of wheat. But we do not have a secure base so that we can look at the skies and mock at the rains or not having rains. There are enough water resources. There is enough land. There are the people. There is a proved technology. But can we take simple things like water, credit, seed and perhaps fertilizer, not to the man who owns 10, 15, 20 or 100 acres, but to a man who owns one hectare or even less? Then the additionality which we want will come.

How to do it? Some people say we can do nothing unless we have thorough-going land reform. I am not one of those who think land

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Lecture delivered at the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, New Delhi, on 26 April 1975.

reform is not essential. But must we wait for the thorough-going land reform and say, meanwhile, that nothing can be done?

Land reform is not a single concept. It has a number of elements. Let not the best be the enemy of the good. We can, as we have done in some parts of our country, even consolidate holdings, give a little security to the share-croppers and then engage in the final exercise of more equitable distribution of land. Even if we do this and generate the will to do so, we are on the way both to solving a major problem and generating the resources for an impetuous advance.

This imposes on our thinking processes a discipline, a discipline of facts and of the primacy of facts over hypothesis. What is peculiar in our thinking is the tyranny of hypotheses. If facts do not fit into a hypothesis, it is the facts which have to go and the hypothesis remains inviolate. That kind of methodology will destroy us.

Our politics in its broadest sense is singularly immune from the discipline of facts. This is not a criticism of We and They. All of us are part and parcel of a single society. Each one of us in a democratic social order has to play his part. Unless one understands the inwardness of processes of transformation of our country, we cannot even communicate. What is communication for? The language in its origin was in use for organizing human labour in its most primitive form.

People made noises, and those noises collected people. Languages were used to summon up people to fight a danger. Language has been a means later on of wider organization not merely of labour but of thought. But if communication is a means of organizing thought processes or action, if it is a means of stimulating changes in attitudes and ideas, obviously such a language or the means and mechanism of transmitting this language (whether modern, ultra-modern, intermediate or rustic, whatever the means you adopt) must ensure that the communicator is familiar with the processes of change.

There was a time, not so long ago, when in my childhood there appeared on the scene a man at whom the intellectuals laughed. He looked ridiculous, a man with funny ideas. Yet he was a communicator. A simple idea he communicated. Men who were lying prostrate for centuries stood up with dignity and courage and conviction. Gandhi was a great communicator. And people who worked with him and around him were great communicators. They owned no newspapers. Such newspapers as they put out were confiscated from time to time. Yet from north to south, east to west, every village got the message. We are face to face with a phenomenon of a different order in selling a product. We are involved in selling an idea, an idea of change, bringing about changes.



This country is blessed with talent and manpower. It is a natural endowment. But our capital resources are very scarce. Yet we are extravagant in the use of capital. Why is this so? It is an attitudinal problem.

There is, first of all, the dichotomy between people and government — It is We and They. The money, which Government gives, whether for development or anything, is their money and not my money. Therefore, for every unit of this scarce resource invested the outputs are heart-rending. How can we go on this basis? Really, every unit must produce itself and produce extra. Look at our electricity generation and distribution. We have invested vast resources — resources derived from direct and indirect taxation, from deprivation. Even to this date the Electricity Boards have a debit balance. Look at irrigation. We are not trying to recover the capital costs. Let us return at least the nominal interest charges on it. Yet even today our irrigation system is producing a net loss.

Now apparently this is nobody's problem. But if we do not face it, where shall we have the resources to invest?

We are now face to face with a series of questions in our national life, a question first of all of offering a measure of consonance between reality, rationality, science and technology and the realm of politics. We must bring rationality in our debate, we must subject our debates to the discipline of facts and to scientific methodologies of testing hypothesis in the light of the facts. We must face up to this problem as communicators. You will have to be more sensitive to this problem — whether you are writing for the press or broadcasting — to the essential task of transforming this great country of ours.

In the future, the twenty-first century, the survival value of India is far greater than many other countries. Because, ultimately the consumer societies are reaching a crisis of their whole philosophy in so far as their motivational factors are merely consumer-oriented. Even socialist societies are experiencing difficulties in stimulating men to action.

Man does not live by bread alone. Yet, for the manufacturer the consumer is the king, whether it is a socialist or a capitalist society. This is creating a great crisis. We have to have a vision of a society which, while putting food in a hungry man's belly, also gives him hope so that he can think. That vision is not of an ever increasing consumption pattern. Where consumption has been the sole motivating factor we reach a *cul de sac*. There is no way out. It is the duty of every person who feels a sense of inner pride of being an intelligent person to think about this.



## DEBATE ON OWNERSHIP OF FOREIGN NEWSPAPERS IN INDIA

Without claiming infallibility, we are firmly of the view that all upheavals in human history have stemmed from the suppression of the human spirit and human identity. It is not surprising that the French Revolution took place under the flag of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. Even the dominant emotion of the Russian Revolution was a yearning for peace. That is why it was first manifested by the soldiers and sailors. Even the Chinese Revolution, though paying homage to Marxian dialectics as reflected in the mind of Mao Zedong, was in essence and substance, a revolution to assert China's honour and national dignity — a process which was stimulated by the great Sun Yat Sen, whom the Chinese Communists never disowned. The great upheaval in our own country, stimulated by Mahatma Gandhi, centred on moral issues expressed by words like *swaraj* through ahimsa and satyagraha.

There are no economic theories which illumine the workings of the human spirit. That is perhaps the reason why in all his budget speeches, the distinguished Finance Minister of India had to express himself with the help of poetry and also warn us against "heartless consumerism". It is considerations of this sort which have impelled us to examine the theme of this editorial about the entry of foreign newspapers in India. Even in Great Britain, the former national heritage secretary, Mr David Mellor, is reported in the *Guardian Weekly* of 4 September 1994, as having said: "One of the great self-inflicted wounds of Britain in the nineteen-eighties has been to allow so many national newspapers to fall into the hands of foreign companies who sometimes delight in demonstrating that they have no long-term interest in Britain and its well being."

Can Bharat, Hindustan or India be less sensitive to our heritage, civilization or even national interest than Mr Mellor of Britain?

In trying to respond to this question, we are examining in the succeeding paragraphs, the question of the entry of foreign newspapers into India from a variety of angles.

Under Article 19 (1) (a) of the Indian Constitution, the right to freedom of expression and freedom of speech is vested only with Indian citizens. Keeping in view the constitutional guarantees given to the Indian press, the government had taken a policy decision in 1955, at the Cabinet level under the chairmanship of the late Pandit Nehru. This

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*Man & Development*: September 1994.

resolution had restricted the entry of foreign newspapers and news agencies into India.

On 30 September 1955, the then Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Mr B V Keskar, announced in the Lok Sabha that the Government of India had decided to accept the First Press Commission's recommendations, following which, foreign newspapers and periodicals dealing mainly with news and current affairs should not be allowed to bring out editions in India.

Twenty-five years later, the Second Press Commission, with Justice K K Mathew as its chairman, considered the same issue in the light of changing circumstances and recommended the implementation of a specific legal provision, under which no newspaper undertaking would have any stake in foreign ownership either in the form of shares or in the form of loans.

Newspapers published in India are thus governed by a special law, i.e., Press and Registration of Books Act. Under this century-old Act, the British did not extend the right to publishing to any other foreigner. Only Indian citizens and those among them who normally resided in India could be editors or publishers.

Foreign media owners are now seeking tie-ups with local parties and have submitted projects to the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) apparently to exploit the enormous Indian market. By employing Indian editors and managers as publishers they shall be operating under a corporate veil. They shall, thus, be able to avail of the Fundamental Rights available to Indian citizens, although the real masters may be sitting beyond our shores. If FIPB clears their proposal they shall also be able to circumvent the Press and Registration of Books Act.

The newspaper has two sides: the business side and the public service side. The fact that newspapers have begun to make profits in the changed economic scenario does not alter their fundamental and basic *raison d'etre*. Newspapers still remain repositories of public trust and have a tremendous bearing on the functioning of the organs of the state.

Newspapers are ambassadors of a culture. Even developed democratic nations, otherwise in the forefront of the economic reforms, have consciously adopted a different stance on the issue of the entry of foreign media. France is known to have zealously guarded its culture by saying "No" to unrestricted foreign audio-visual media. Even in Sweden, publishing rights are not extended to foreigners. The position taken by several other countries, such as China and other South East Asian countries, is well known. In the US, Rupert Murdoch had to acquire

American citizenship before he was allowed to acquire ownership interests in broadcasting.

It is important to appreciate that newspaper publishing the world over has been recognized as a special profession in keeping with the role a newspaper has to play in the functioning of the state and democratic polity. Therefore, it is not without reason that the founders of our Constitution, having taken note of this crucial role of the press, as well as historical western prejudices against India, had deliberately confined the publishing rights to Indian citizens.

The Indian press, in keeping with its traditions of responsibility and accountability, has played a vital role in shaping public opinion. There are instances when the Indian Press has passionately opposed the policies of governments in power, but has never taken a position which is in conflict with India's integrity. The Indian press has been faithful to the nation-state and has always upheld national sovereignty.

The foreign press on the other hand has entirely a different agenda. It is known to project India in an objectionable and distorted perspective, with the sole intention of tarnishing India's standing as a peace loving nation. It is a matter of record that several foreign publications have repetitively printed India's political map without Kashmir. Multinationals, by definition, are not loyal to any nation. The biased reportage in the western press on India, especially on sensitive issues such as Kashmir, Northeast, Punjab, inter-community relations, under the guise of human rights, is well known.

Today, when India opens to the world, we need to look at the entry of newspapers from a larger perspective rather than blindly allow, them in, on the pretext of economic liberalization.

Foreign companies consider newspapers merely as goods and commodities and as such seek approvals of the Foreign Investment Promotion Board and the Registrar of Trade Marks, in violation of the basic premise of our Constitution, to enter the publishing business in India. Most of the rules and regulations relating to foreign investment in India primarily relate to priority industries and industrial products requiring significant investment in the project.

India has welcomed foreign companies in other fields, with the twin objective of attracting capital investments as well as proprietary technology. It is true that there are several sectors, especially infrastructural, such as power and telecom, requiring massive investments which Indian entrepreneurs are not in a position to fund. Although the government's objective has been to attract foreign investment in manufacturing and infrastructural development, foreign



companies have shown more interest in exploiting India, as a consumer market with the intention of wooing its affluent middle-class.

Newspapers do not entail high investment. Nor do foreign newspapers claim to have patented technology. The modernization and professional upgradation in the Indian press during the last four to five years has indeed been phenomenal, both in terms of technological advancements and editorial quality. Newspapers in India are perceived as highly versatile and competitive, offering good value for time and money to readers.

What we need to appreciate is that the entry of foreign newspapers would neither bring technology nor investment. On the other hand, the cost that the country would have to pay for allowing foreign newspapers is incalculable, especially when they are not attuned to larger social and political purposes.

The Indian press today is harnessed with state-of-the-art technology and can make do with lower staff strengths, but for the strict labour laws. Foreign companies, starting new ventures based on high level of technology, obviously would employ less people and would not have the same compulsion as Indian companies with regard to the Wage Boards.

To sum up, India is a multi-faith, multi-linguistic, multi-cultural state with different communities living in harmony from time immemorial. Newspapers have played a vital role in nurturing the harmonious relationship among communities. Though newspaper publishing is increasingly becoming profitable, the role of newspapers as instruments of public opinion cannot be overlooked.

We cannot afford to subserve our culture to western ways. Indian culture is a binding force that unites all the communities into one cohesive nation. The distinctive feature of Indian civilization has been rooted in pluralistic humanism. This accounts for the survival of Indian civilization, despite ravages of Time. No doctrine underpinning economic liberalization can deal with concepts of identities of human beings and of nations despite mindless repetition of a meaningless phrase which describes the world as a "Global Village".

Entry of foreign newspapers could adversely affect the institutional depth the country has and threaten its political, economic and social stability.

In favour of foreign investment in newspapers, it is being argued that:

- Almost all fields are being thrown open to foreign



investment, many with 51 per cent or 100 per cent, why not in newspapers?

- Foreign investment leads to greater competition thereby reducing costs and improving quality — the same would happen with newspapers.
- Foreign investment, like that of *Financial Times*, would help to sell India in foreign markets.

If carefully examined, none of these arguments have any compelling advantage:

- The media should not be equated with other commodities or other industrial ventures. Media influence the mind of our people. While the Indian newspapers, the fourth estate, have pointed out errors in the policies of the ruling party from time to time, their loyalty to the Indian State has never been in doubt and they have always stood for the unity and integrity of the country. Foreign owners have no such loyalty and some of them may have intentions antagonistic to the interests of our state. In the changing world scenario, many foreign countries are not favourably inclined to the Indian stand on such issues as Kashmir, Punjab, Assam, LTTE, and they are not committed to our unity and integrity and some would even prefer India to be Balkanized. Once foreign investments are permitted, even Pakistani citizens would acquire ownership through FII route or through holding companies in tax-saving countries or through faceless corporations.
- Indian newspapers have by and large maintained a high standard of journalism and of upholding democratic values, despite many trials and tribulations. India has produced many illustrious journalists, who can hold their head high among the best in the world. On the technology front, there has already been a sea change and Indian newspapers have been constantly upgrading their product. Unlike other areas, technology to this industry is available off the shelf and is not tied up with foreign investment.
- India's image abroad depends upon political stability and our economic policies. For the last 40 years, the foreign press has been largely inimical to our interests and has presented a distorted and a generally negative picture of

our country abroad. It is only now that they have started talking of helping to sell India abroad. There is no guarantee that they shall continue to project a positive image. If any policy-decisions turn adverse to foreign investment, they shall lose no time in spreading canards about India.

- The undertaking not to repatriate profits for some years can hardly be any ground for justifying foreign investment in this field. The investment required for newspapers are not of such a magnitude. The Indian entrepreneurs can undertake this task. Foreign investment in other areas is justified mainly on account of the large investment required. Though latest technology will come only with investment, a move to achieve international standards would boost our exports, bring greater competitiveness and make Indian industry cost effective. None of these considerations apply in the case of newspapers.

It is to be devoutly hoped that the ongoing debate within our country about the entry of foreign newspapers as well as foreign news agencies will be carried on further before the Government of India takes any decision. We are about to observe the 125th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. It might be useful to re-read his book titled *Hind Swaraj* instead of performing the ritual of putting flowers at his Samadhi.

The MacBride Commission Report, which examined the opportunities — and the anxieties — thrown up by the global media, has been buried alive by its own parent. An eerie silence has descended on UNESCO, but we may usefully remind ourselves of the recommendations made by that distinguished panel of international experts. It had acknowledged "essential differences between industries producing consumer goods and those producing information and cultural items. The same commercial logic should not guide both types of enterprises". It shared the concern, in its own words, with "public opinion in many countries and international public opinion in general on issues relating to communication ownership and control structures and their consequences on both national and transnational levels."

The panel's call for guidelines and codes of conduct so that transnational corporations active in the field of communication "do not neglect or are not detrimental to the national objectives and socio-cultural values of host countries" is yet to be acted upon. Until that is done, it will be short-sighted to allow foreign interests to own, control

and run our newspapers and magazines. It has been said that a nation whose mass media are under foreign domination cannot claim to be a nation. The MacBride Commission takes note of this valid proposition. If the Indian middle classes lull themselves into thinking that a few foreign-owned publications do not amount to domination, they are being naive in a world in which the realm of ideas is far more subtle than the realm of "goods and services". Which is why invasion comes in new forms and we may not even know it.

## NON-ALIGNMENT: RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

Renewed attempts are being made to spread confusion among the Non-Aligned States as they prepare to meet in Havana in September this year. The current efforts to deflect us all from the path we had hitherto pursued are more insidious and, therefore, more menacing. There is of course nothing new in this. Those of us who were privileged to play some part in implementing our foreign policy in the years following our independence can never forget the constant outpouring of scorn and calumny accompanied by deliberate misrepresentation of India's intent and purpose.

That purpose was utterly simple: It was to hug our independence; to sustain it by stout hearts and the distant vision of having a destiny of our own, moulded and shaped by our own hands. For many years, India — poor but proud — remained steadfast in the pursuit of her purpose; we were almost alone in the early years until the process of decolonization gained momentum and new states began to emerge during the fifties and the sixties.

I am summoning up the past so that we are better able to cope with the present and the future. The present difficulties can certainly be resolved and the stresses overcome only if we see the situation with an almost clinical objectivity bearing all the time in our minds the essence and substance of non-alignment.

Students of historiography know how contentious is this field of knowledge. I must confess that my own view is heavily weighted against the mythology so assiduously cultivated and spread that non-alignment took shape and form in 1961 when 25 Heads of State or Government met in Belgrade from 1-6 September. It is not my purpose to downgrade the meeting in Belgrade. It was an important meeting and it took place in times of great anxiety and tensions. But, non-alignment has a longer history; it has for India, at any rate.

One might also observe *en passant* that the policy of non-alignment as pursued by India has tended to show resilience and continuity and has survived a succession of our governments and their itch to be original. Indeed, it shows the soundness of the foundation and structure of Jawaharlal Nehru's design for our foreign policy that it should have survived, though battered and bruised. It survived the onslaughts made on it by the *soi disant* experts, political operators, windbags and

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*Man & Development* : May 1979.



charlatans, who appear and reappear at home and abroad. All this should not lull us into complacency. And by "us" I mean all those in India who hold the original sources of inspiration as a sort of trust. In a statement at a press conference at the UN Correspondents' Association in New York in 1960, Nehru described the sources of his inspiration and of the people of India. He said:

Some people use the word 'neutral' in regard to India's policy. I do not like that word at all, having myself been in the past, perhaps even now to some extent, not exactly a negative individual but a positive individual working for positive causes, working with all the vigour and strength that I could command for those causes, and having, if I may say so with all respect, a certain contempt for a neutral person who has no views at all. One or two of the books I have written bring this out. All my outlook on life is a positive one, not a negative one, not a complacent one. Therefore, I do not think that the word 'neutral' suits me at all. That positive aspect of life is deprived from the conditioning I have had in my life. These factors are many, but the principal factor is the Indian National Movement with Gandhi as its leader.

What applies to me applies, in a greater or less degree, to large number of people in India. When independence came, we naturally thought of more or less following that policy, which was in our minds, in the international sphere. By and large we have tried to follow it. It was, therefore, a continuation of the previous 10 or 20 years of thinking and resolution. Our present policy has, thus, grown out of ourselves; it has not been thrust upon us by anybody. It is not a question of balancing ourselves between groups or blocs of nations which have arisen. That kind of sitting on the fence or balancing has not occurred to us at all. We are adopting a positive policy which we think is right.

I stated that as far as India was concerned, non-alignment did not originate in Belgrade. It did not even originate in the conference of certain number of Afro-Asian States held in Bandung in April 1955. Its roots lay deep in the very struggle for our freedom against British imperialism and in the ethos and the world-view which Gandhi and Nehru imparted to that struggle giving to the most downtrodden Indian a sense of national identity transcending the narrow confines of our socio-religious and regional structures. We were non-aligned *ab inito*. We did not come to it as Yugoslavia did because of conflicts with the Soviet Union.

I am not saying this to make India appear virtuous or to derogate from the distinctive contribution made by Yugoslavia under President Tito's inspiration, but rather to make the obvious point that the countries joining the non-aligned group came to it with differing backgrounds, traditions and perceptions of themselves and of their interests. Each had a strong sense of national identity, and yet a common passionate desire for an international order based on equality.

What then did non-alignment mean to us in India? In my imagination I put this question to Jawaharlal Nehru and I set down his answer as a continuous narrative made up with some editorial licence even though it is compiled from what he said on different occasions:

Most of us have taken part in the struggle for India's freedom for many years past, for a generation or more. One of the legacies of the past has been that there has been no imagination in the understanding of the Indian problem. People have often indulged in, or have presumed to give us advice, not realizing that India, as she is constituted today, wants no one's advice and no one's imposition; the slightest trace of patronage, is resented and will be resented. *We have proclaimed during this past year that we will not attach ourselves to any particular group. That has nothing to do with neutrality, or passivity or anything else.* We have sought to avoid foreign entanglements by not joining one bloc or another. Inevitably, it means we have to plough a lonely furrow. Nonetheless, that is the only honourable and right position for us to take and I am quite sure that by adopting that position, we shall ultimately gain in national and international prestige<sup>1</sup>. (emphasis mine)

Thus the core of non-alignment lay in our efforts to retain an independence of thought, judgment and action under conditions of Cold war which generated the military alliances and arrangements of all sorts. The main purpose behind the policy of non-alignment was to enlarge the areas of co-operation and peace for initiating the gigantic task of India's renewal — economic, social, political and cultural. The only limitation we placed on enlisting that co-operation was a refusal to mortgage our independence.

How was such an independent approach in foreign policy used? One of the earliest efforts made by India was to combat Britain's mistaken notion that security in South East Asia could be built by restoring to the French and the Dutch their imperial domains in Indo-

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1. Jawaharlal Nehru, *India's Foreign Policy*, Publications Divisions 1961, Pages 9-25.

China and Indonesia respectively. Both the follies were part of the larger folly of wanting to register British presence in the East of Suez. However, I am not concerned with the pathology of British and French follies but rather with some of the consequences which flowed from these and how India was affected. *Obviously, the only way in which the armed formations across the frontiers of the Cold War could be outflanked, at least politically, was to stimulate the enlargement of the arena of non-alignment by every available diplomatic means.*

Thus when the Dutch tried to overwhelm the young Indonesian Republic by launching a sudden military attack on 18 December 1948, Jawaharlal Nehru took initiative in calling a Conference in New Delhi on 20 January 1949 to mobilize opinion against the Dutch action. It brought together Afghanistan, Australia, Burma, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Iran, the Lebanon, Pakistan, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Yemen. These countries were represented by Ministers while China, Nepal, New Zealand and Siam (Thailand) sent observers. The Security Council was also activated. And within the Commonwealth, Australia and India took an active part in putting pressure on Ernest Bevin who, at first, sent to the Security Council a junior Foreign Office official to represent Britain. This incensed the Australian High Commissioner in Britain — the burley Mr. Beasley, and provoked him to launch an attack on Bevin. Fortunately, for the British and the Dutch, Indonesia, unlike Indo-China, was not allowed to fester. The French being accustomed to carrying everything to a logical conclusion persisted in their follies not merely in Indo-China, but in Tunisia and Algeria and had to go through the humiliation of a military defeat in Dien Bien Phu and of a near Civil War in France which General de Gaulle just about averted in 1958.

The Indonesian crisis had hardly abated when Korea got engulfed in a war. At this stage, it is not necessary to go into the circumstances of B N Rau's voting in the Security Council which cast on the North Koreans the responsibility of having committed an act of aggression. However, India's efforts thereafter were concentrated on bringing the war to an end. These efforts were made both within the meetings of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers and in the UN. It is an interesting story which I hope to narrate some day. But it ended in India being entrusted with the impossible task of implementing the Truce Agreement, within the framework of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission of which I had the dubious privilege of being the alternate Chairman after the departure of B N Chakravarty, who found Panmunjom and the POW Camps too maddening for his nerves.



However, Nehru's passionate concern and Krishna Menon's persistence paid off. And the Korean War came to an end because India had a shrewd perception that the contending parties were not prepared to let the sphere of hostilities widen beyond their control. In retrospect it would also seem that the attempts to ascertain the wishes of thousands of POWs was a ridiculous exercise in psychological warfare. It established nothing and yet it prolonged the war for nearly two years.

The war in Indo-China provided another impetus for rallying together of the newly emerging Asian and African States. Towards the very end of April 1954, Nehru, Nu, Sastroamidjojo, together with Kotlewala and Mohammad Ali — Prime Ministers respectively of India, Burma, Indonesia, Ceylon and Pakistan — met in Colombo. Their purpose was to co-ordinate positions on the many questions which the Indo-China war had posed for the Geneva Conference. It will be recalled that even on the eve of Geneva Conference, there was ominous talk about use of "Baby Atom Bombs".

It was also known that between John Foster Dulles and Admiral Radford attempts were being made to find purely military solution to Indo-China's problems and for the security of South East Asia. Speaking in Lok Sabha on 24 April 1954, on the eve of the Colombo meeting, Nehru voiced his anxieties. He said:

While the decision about the Geneva Conference was a welcome development, it was soon followed by others which caused us concern and foreboding. Among these were: (1) the repeated references to instant and massive retaliation, to possible attacks on the Chinese mainland and statements about extending the scope and intensity of the hostilities in Indo-China; and (2) an invitation to the western countries, to the ANZUS powers, and to some Asian States to join in united and collective action in South East Asia. This was preceded by statements, which came near to assuming protection, or declaring unilaterally a kind of Monroe Doctrine over the countries of South East Asia.

There were thus indications of impending direct intervention in Indo-China and the internationalization of the war and its extension and intensification.

Apart, however, from the Indo-China situation, Africa, both in the North and the South of the Sahara, still awaited liberation from the British, French and Portugese domination. Economic problems of development also began to raise their head. And so the meeting in Colombo, led to a further meeting in Bogor (Indonesia). That meeting



paved the way for the Bandung Conference which opened on 18 April and ended on 24 April 1955.

The Bandung Conference was an Afro-Asian affair. The participating countries were: Afghanistan, Cambodia, the People's Republic of China, Egypt, Ethiopia, the Gold Coast (Ghana), Iran, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Laos, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Nepal, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North), the State of Vietnam and Yemen.

Despite the hostile reception given to the Bandung by the western world and its media, despite the explicit affiliations of many of the states participating in the Conference, despite the heated debates about equating western Imperialism and "Soviet Colonialism", the participating states were under compulsion to reach broad consensus and to find a common denominator. In this India played a creative role in discovering the common ground. It was not easy to do this. Even simple matters of translating English into Chinese created such enormous problems that Nehru wondered what Marxism became when rendered into the Chinese language. However, what troubled him most was the problem of "Cold War affiliations". Speaking in our Parliament on 30 April 1955 he said:

The problem of Dependent Peoples or Colonialism was the subject which at once created both pronounced agreement and disagreement. In the condemnation of colonialism in its well-understood sense, namely, the rule of one people by another, with its attendant evils, the Conference was at one. It affirmed its support of those still struggling to attain their independence.

There was, however, another and different view in the Conference which sought to bring under colonialism and to include in these above affirmations the alleged conditions in some countries which are sovereign nations. Some of these are members of the United Nations and all of them are independent in terms of international law and practice. They have diplomatic relations with ourselves and other countries of the world including the big powers. It appeared to us that irrespective of whatever views may be held in regard to the conditions prevailing in these countries or of relationships that may exist between the Soviet Union and them, they could in no way be called colonies; nor could their alleged problems come under the classification of colonialism. To so include them in any general statement on behalf of the Conference could be accomplished only by acceptance by a great number of the

participants of the Conference, including ourselves, of political views and attitudes which are not theirs. It is no injustice to anyone concerned to say that this controversy reflects a projection of the cold war affiliations into the arena of the Asian-African Conference. While the countries concerned did — and indeed had a right to — hold their own views and position on this as on any other matter, such views could not become part of any formulation on behalf of the Conference. It was, however, entirely to the good that these conflicting views were aired and much to the credit of the Conference, that after patient and persistent endeavour, a formulation was forthcoming which did not do violence to the firmly held opinions of all concerned. This is a matter of which it may be said that one of the purposes of the Conference, namely, to recognize diversities but to find unity, stands vindicated.

The hostility displayed by the western press had, altogether, a beneficial effect. For it led a man like General Romulo (the Philippines) to remark:

The American tendency to brand any nationalist movement whatever in Asia and Africa as communistic rests on another of those assumptions which urgently needed to be examined. There are, unquestionably, nationalist movements in Asia which are Communist-led or which are abetted by the Communists. But this fact does not necessarily invalidate the intrinsic quality of the genuine nationalist movement in the region.... the Americans are so obfuscated by the fear of Communism they cannot think straight. Anti-Communism in the United States is a new form of national hysteria.... Uneasiness of the West about Bandung betrayed an uneasy conscience, a sense of guilt regarding the wrongs and crimes of Western colonialism that, it was feared, would be recited and condemned at the Conference.

The final communique of the Bandung Conference dealt with a variety of problems under the heads of: "Economic Co-operation", "Cultural Co-operation", "Problems of Dependent Peoples", "Other Problems" and "Promotion of World Peace and Co-operation". The thoughts on economic co-operation were rather vague and nebulous. These reflected a certain amount of awareness of the weak position of the producers of primary commodities and showed concern at their helplessness in matters connected with shipping and freight. Interestingly enough, the Conference "felt that exchange of information

on matters relating to oil, such as remittance of profits and taxation, might eventually lead to the formulation of common policy". Quite obviously, there was uneasiness. But there was no great insight into the nature of world market economy or about any strategies of development. However, the section dealing with Cultural Co-operation was significant. It reflected with intensity an awareness of the participants that the long years of Western domination and subjection had destroyed cultural contacts among them and had made them strangers to one another. The communique recommended that cultural co-operation among countries of Asia and Africa be directed towards the acquisition of knowledge of each other's country, arranging cultural exchanges and exchange of information.

It has taken 20 years for the non-aligned states to take some halting steps in the fields of communication and information. Realization has come all too slowly that cultural imperialism, as a counterpart of global market economy with the multinational dominance even of the information media, exerts a subversive influence on international relations. Two instances may be cited. The first one relates to Chile and the other to our own country.

According to a United States Senate report, the Top Secret US Intelligence policy making unit in the US Executive which was then managed by Henry Kissinger "approved large amounts to sustain opposition media and.... spent 1.5 million dollars in support of *El Mercurio*, the country's (Chile's) largest newspaper....; produced several magazines with national circulations and a large number of books and special studies.... *El Mercurio* was a major propaganda channel (against Allende regime) during 1970-73".

As for images of India, let us see ourselves with the eyes of a foreign media:

I stood on the balcony of the Taj Mahal and I, with all the emeralds, and all of the rubies, and the wall, and how beautiful it was, and all the bougainvillea vines, and all of the orange blossoms, and everything was absolutely fabulous. I looked right down, and watched a group of vultures fighting over the corpse of a dead child in the Ganges.

Now this is what is going on there. Seven hundred million people in a country that is the size of, oh, may be less than half the size of the United States, and 99 per cent of the population is illiterate, has no way to make a living.... I went through villages where there were thousands of snakes in baskets. The people have been bitten so many times by cobras that they are

now not only addicted, I mean, not only immune, but addicted, just like heroin. They have to have the snake bite almost every day. If you were bitten by one of these people, you can die within 60 seconds, because their blood is so toxic. And there is no way to deal with this country.... The people are the religion.

So much for the Taj Mahal, and the Ganges which now apparently flows by Agra and addiction to Cobra bites! And now for Calcutta:

I was in India about a week and I did not even go to Calcutta, which they say is the end of the world. The pilots on our flights who fly the planes will not even get off the aeroplanes now in Calcutta. They take cans of tuna fish and bottled water and they sleep on the airplane all night, until it is time to leave the next morning, because they will not get out, because you have to step over dead bodies in Calcutta, and the walls and the pavement of every street is covered with defecation (and) elephants roam wild through the mud and cattle.

I walked out of the shop where I bought this, and felt so guilty as an American leaving this shop and right in front of the shop stood a child with his hand out and his leg had been broken by its mother, so it could beg. They blind their children. They break their arms.

One might think that I have quoted Katherine Mayo. No, it is not Miss Mayo. And it is not an episode of a dim past. These images of India were painted in January 1976. By whom? By a well-known film and drama critic, Rex Reed, on Johny Carson's Tonight Show which commands an audience of 20 million to 30 million people in USA.

I thought I would point all this out, so that we realize what India and the non-aligned world as a whole are up against *today* and *tomorrow*, even if we forget our yesterdays.

Now, to resume the story of the further unfoldment of Non-alignment in the years following the Bandung Conference. A little over six years separate the Bandung meeting and the first meeting of the Heads of States or Government of the Non-aligned States which was held in Belgrade from 1-6 September 1961. These years were eventful, influencing the formalization of non-alignment. A dramatic growth took place in the number of States in the Continents of Asia, Africa and Latin America which began adhering to the group of Non-aligned States.

Many of these new states emerged after a prolonged armed conflict. Cuba, of course, stands by itself. But it was the tenacity with which the Portugese resisted decolonization which caused the gravest



concern. The effete Portuguese imperialism of Salazaar, emboldened by the protection it got under the Nato system, thought it could withstand, what Harold Macmillan somewhat picturesquely described as, Winds of Change. Thus a possible peaceful decolonization was converted into a revolutionary upheaval. Similarly, pacts like Baghdad and Seato made the Asian Governments involved so insensitive to the needed internal changes that violence became the only means of change. Between 1955 when the Baghdad pact was signed and uptodate, Iraq, Iran and Pakistan have all been involved in sanguinary internal conflicts. And Seato remained a non-event. What will happen in the area which contains Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines no one can say despite regimes devoted to internal pacification.

The famous French author, Raymond Aron, in his book *Peace and War* had something perceptive to say about the sub-system of alliances which the United States built in search of security. And though Aron published his work in 1966, wisdom demands that we pay attention to it. He wrote:

In a general way, in our period, these alliances can fulfill two quite different functions: either they aim at deterring a possible aggressor, or they aim at influencing the internal policy of the allied states (of course, these two functions are not exclusive of each other)... Since these two functions differ radically and since each of them is linked to the particular features of the present system, it is easy to criticize the American alliances either by reference to the traditional conception of alliances, or by misunderstanding the specific function each of them has.... The cost and advantage of these treaties (mutual assistance pacts or agreements on military aid) between the United States and any Asian or Middle Eastern State today or African State tomorrow depend on many circumstances. *The arms furnished to the pro-western government, in certain cases, reinforce the latter's authority. In others, the unpopularity that the alliance with the West costs the government more than balances the material support, so that the final accounting is unfavourable to the very interests the West had intended to support.*

Local circumstances, in the sub-system, also determine the meaning which is given to American intervention. Will the latter be interpreted as legitimate in the global context or illegitimate in the regional one? Did Nehru regard the South East Asia Treaty as likely to reinforce the defence of the free world, or to introduce the cold war into a zone which could and should

remain outside the world conflict? Are the American weapons provided to Pakistan being turned against the Soviet bloc or against Afghanistan or against India, since the Kashmir question has not yet been solved?

*Lastly, these alliances or pacts of military aid are effective or deplorable depending on the political circumstances within the nation. Is the government, whose power is confirmed by the alliance or by American aid, the only possible one, outside the Communist party? Is it the most popular of the non-Communist parties? The danger is that American intervention will make the opposition parties increasingly anti-American, including those preferring neutrality to commitment without inclining to the Communist camp. Would the best method of avoiding the Sovietization of Laos have been to support the groups on the western side or the partisans of neutrality? (Emphasis mine)*

The thoughtlessness with which pacts, subsidiary alliances and military support was organized by the US had the inevitable result of stimulating revolutionary decolonization which added a new stream to the Non-aligned States. Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea, Algeria, Cuba, Angola, Mozambique, all came to non-alignment after prolonged revolutionary struggles. In addition, various national liberation movements began to exert influence on, what might have remained, orderly deliberations of the non-aligned states. Their entry and the consequent impact was to imperceptibly turn non-alignment into a sort of movement rather than an inter-state get-together.

We Indians can, perhaps, understand the situation better if we recall how Gandhi's entry into the Indian National Congress converted an organization of liberal intellectuals into a movement involving masses of people of India. It is necessary to grasp this if we are not to fall victims to the strenuous efforts now being made to divide the non-aligned between various categories, e.g., moderate and extremists, militant and non-militant, etc.

Thus, by the time the Belgrade meeting opened on 1 September 1961 Cuba and Algeria had joined the Non-aligned group. And Iraq had been through a bloody civil conflict leading to the emergence of a radical regime in 1958. Cold war still raged. There was a flare up in Berlin, and the proposed meeting in Paris between Eisenhower and Krushchev was cancelled following the U-2 incident. In the fifteenth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations (1960) Nehru, Nkrumah, Nasser, Sukarno and Tito joined together to propose a draft Resolution for the General Assembly calling upon the USA and USSR to "resume

contacts" and to "find a solution to unsettled problems". Though the resolution was not pressed to vote, it set into motion the erosion of the mechanical majority which the United States and its NATO partners were accustomed to command in the UN. Indeed, this very fifteenth session of the UN General Assembly witnessed the emergence of another sort of majority when it adopted the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. Such was the background to the meeting in Belgrade.

The Heads of State or Government were heavily preoccupied with the political issues, groping for a framework of ideas in terms of which non-alignment, despite its diversities, could find its intellectual moorings. In the way it analysed the international situation and suggested approaches to the solution of specific problems, the Belgrade declaration attained greater depth than the Bandung one. This was, relatively, easy to achieve. For it represented in a generalized form the unanimity on the need to keep out of the cold war, to support processes of decolonization, to assert racial equality and dignity and to throw the collective political weight of the non-aligned world in favour of peace and disarmament. The declaration also demanded an enlargement of the membership of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council reflecting the changed composition of UN membership.

However, the problems of development, of understanding the economic content of neo-colonialism and of the nature of global market economy, the Belgrade declaration showed no great insight beyond expressing a feeling that efforts needed to "be made to remove economic imbalance inherited from colonialism and imperialism." Bemoaning the "ever widening gap in the standards of living between the few economically advanced countries and the many economically less developed countries", the meeting merely demanded the establishment and operation of a UN Capital Development Fund and just terms of trade. A demand was also formulated for a get-together of countries to face policies of pressure in the economic sphere.

The subsequent meetings of the Heads of State or Government registered continuous growth of the participating States, the extension of the regional spread across Asia, Africa, Central and South America and Europe. Also, an increasing number of countries and organizations sent observers or participated as guests. The national liberation organizations, especially from Africa, made their peculiar impact on the deliberations of the meetings. Beginning with the Lusaka Conference (1970), then with the Algiers (1973) and ending with the Colombo (1976) conference the Non-aligned showed increasing concern over the



problems of economic, social and cultural transformations. Simultaneous activities of the Group of 77 in UNCTAD, brought home to the poor and the dispossessed nations the pitiless nature of the world economic order and the rapacity of the appetites of the affluent countries within the world market economy. The breakdown of the monetary system set up at Bretton Woods, the disappointments with the UN development decades, and the use of aid as subtle pressure points led to an increasing disenchantment.

Consequently, the Non-aligned countries began to grow out of their earlier age of innocence and had to face the facts of life even though within the group there were still many countries who were tied to their erstwhile imperial masters or had within them dominant political groups whose political existence in the countries concerned depended heavily on the solicitude of the western world. And yet even these states wanted to appear to their respective peoples dressed up as Non-aligned if only to hide their alignment.

The various documents of Colombo Conference bearing on political and economic issues are qualitatively subtler in perception. These show a maturing of understanding of political and economic problems. In assessing the policy and role of non-alignment, the political declaration states:

Non-alignment symbolizes mankind's search for peace and security among nations and the determination to establish a new and equitable international economic, social and political order. It is a vital force in the struggle against imperialism in all its forms and manifestations, and all other forms of foreign domination. Non-alignment upholds the right of all peoples to freedom and self-determination and of all nations to pursue their own independent strategy for development and for participation in the resolution of international problems. It strengthens resistance to the politics of pressure and domination from whatever quarter.... As a result of recent developments, the importance of ensuring the genuine and complete independence of states, as distinct from merely formal sovereignty, had been enhanced. The problem of unequal relations between states, often amounting to domination, continues to be a disturbing phenomenon even negating the hard-won freedom of some states. Today, one of the principal tasks of the Non-aligned remains the combating of unequal relations and domination arising from neo-colonialism and similar forms of domination.



As for the Economic Declaration, its very introduction unravels the inter-connections between politics and economics. It states:

The Heads of States or Government of Non-Aligned Countries consider that economic problems have emerged as the most acute problems in international relations today. The crisis of the world economic system continues to assume ever-growing proportions. Developing countries are the victims of this world-wide crisis which severely affects political and economic relations. The widening of the gap between developed and developing countries is one of the most threatening sources of tensions and conflicts. It is increasingly evident that the existing system cannot ensure the promotion of the development of the developing countries and hasten the eradication of poverty, hunger, sickness, illiteracy and also the social scourges engendered by centuries of domination and exploitation. Thus the establishment of the New International Economic Order is of the utmost political importance. The struggle for political and economic independence, for the full sovereignty over natural resources and domestic activities and for the greater participation of developing countries in the production and distribution of goods, and the rendering of services and basic changes in the international division of labour assumes the highest priority. Breaking up of the resistance to the struggle for the new order represents the primary task of the Non-aligned and other developing countries. The elimination of foreign aggression, foreign occupation, racial discrimination, apartheid, imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism and all other forms of dependence and subjugation, interference in internal affairs, domination and exploitation are crucial to the economics of Non-alignment,

An important aspect of the deliberations at Colombo was the endorsement of the decisions taken at a Ministerial Conference held in New Delhi in July 1976 on the question of Non-aligned Press Agency Pool. The full magnitude of the problem faced by Non-aligned States in the area of communication and information has been articulated in the Political Declaration. *Inter alia*, it states :

A new international order in the fields of information and mass communications is as vital as a new international economic order. The Non-aligned countries noted with concern the vast and ever-growing gap between communication

capacities in non-aligned countries and in the advanced countries, which is a legacy of their colonial past. This has created a situation of dependence and domination in which the majority of countries are reduced to being passive recipients of biased, inadequate and distorted information. The fuller identification and affirmation of their national and cultural identity thus required them to rectify this serious imbalance and to take urgent steps to provide greater momentum in this new area of mutual co-operation. The emancipation and development of national information media is an integral part of the overall struggle for political, economic and social independence for a large majority of the people of the world who should not be denied the right to inform and to be informed objectively and correctly. Self-reliance in sources of information is as important as technological self-reliance since dependence in the field of information in turn retards the very achievement of political and economic growth.

As we move towards the Havana Summit, the vast multitude of this earth of ours are now in the Non-Aligned movement. It has come a long way, painfully, hesitatingly and through great suffering, sacrifice and blood spilling. This impetuous growth in number has evoked anger and frustration among the rich and the affluent who are psychologically and emotionally unreconciled to the revolt of yesterday's slaves. And so we are, alternately, coaxed, cajoled, patted on our backs, threatened, reviled, ignored and set one against another. We are described as "noisy millions"; some call us beggars; some flatter us that we are responsible and moderate. The frenetic Daniel Patrick Moynihan foams at his mouth. Henry Kissinger issues threats that "those who seek to manipulate UN membership by procedural abuse may well inherit any empty shell". All these are desperate cries of woe. The US domination over UN is over; mechanical majorities cannot be rigged up by the arm twisting of the Latin Americans. Perhaps, the meek are about to inherit the earth.

In recent years a Cuban bug has afflicted the western world. It has also infected the present day Chinese leadership giving to one an Alice in Wonderland feeling that the great Hans are getting "curioser and curioser". The Cuban virus has been a subject of study by serious scholars and journalists.

The spectre of little Cuba and, if we are to believe our Chinese Asian brothers, of Vietnam too, is haunting Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and Asia. Just as in the days of Macarthy paranoia, international Communists were found lurking under every bed, so the Cubans and the

Vietnamese are tending to be omnipresent with Russian snow on their boots even in the hot and humid climes of the continents concerned.

I have already quoted from Raymond Aron's monumental work. And Aron is no left wing intellectual, nor a romantic like Malraux or a Debre. His credentials as Research Professor at Harvard are impeccable. Let us listen to what he has to say about the Cuban spectre:

The Cuban revolution immediately modified the situation throughout the Western Hemisphere. China's conversion to communism, the achievement of a thermonuclear weapon by the Soviet Union, the launching of the Sputniks — none of these *weltgeschichtlich* events, as the Germans say, has not so much impressed the leaders and peoples of South America, nor so profoundly shaken the prestige and authority of the United States, as the Castro revolution and the challenge to the super power launched by the revolutionary regime of the small one.... Why did the earth shake, in Latin America, after the Cuban revolution and not after the Chinese one? The reasons are simple, eternal: neither the means of transport nor the means of destruction have suppressed the human significance of distance, the mutual reinforcements of historical relationship and spatial proximity. What Fidel Castro has done, other men in Brazil or Peru may also dream of doing. In any case, all the peoples of Latin America feel that the Cuban experiment is instructive, that it suggests a possible path.... The social crisis is no less serious in Latin America than elsewhere, the governments there are no more solid, the grievances against the United States are more virulent by very reason of the latter's proximity and supremacy, and by reason, too, of the action of the great corporations. In order to obtain increased aid, Latin America lacked only one argument, but a decisive one, the Communist or 'leftist' peril. This Castro has furnished, and in good measure.

A commentator in the 18 August 1978 issue of *New Statesman*, Mike Phillips, wrote about Cuba and the Caribbean. He wrote:

To look at Cuba from the Caribbean is an eye-opening experience. From outside the region, Cuba is most often seen as a tool of Soviet policy and, as such, fatally discredited within its own sphere of influence. The reverse is very nearly true.

Cuba's continued and intractable existence has become the focus of a renewed ideological offensive; and one of the more successful targets has been its Caribbean neighbours. Even in

the most conservative of Caribbean regimes, Castroism has become the standard in any argument about which direction the society should take. The shift can be measured by the fact that when Jamaica celebrated its independence in 1962 and then Prime Minister, Sir Alexander Bustamante, insisted on inviting only the USA and its allies. Nowadays, hostility to US interests and solidarity with Cuba is an essential part of the country's foreign policy. Trade and aid between Jamaica, Guyana and Cuba is now a regular and commonplace feature of the region's economic life. It would be a foolhardy government in either Jamaica or Guyana which denied that it was trying to emulate Cuba's achievements. These developments are echoed by a renewed pro-Fidel groundswell among Latin American nationalists.

It is not Castroite propaganda which has brought about the change, but the fact of Cuba's survival and in the failure of North American policy in the Caribbean and Latin America.

As for Cuba's involvement in Africa, the Non-Aligned movement can hardly now object. At their Cairo Conference (1964), the Heads of State or Government overwhelmingly endorsed the following recommendations with Malwai *alone* expressing reservation:

The Conference: Urges the participating countries to afford all necessary material support — financial and military — to the freedom fighters in the territories under Portuguese colonial rule;

Takes the view that support should be given to the Revolutionary Government of Angola in exile and to the nationalist movements struggling for the independence of the Portuguese colonies and assistance to the Special Bureau set up by the OAU in regard to the application of sanctions against Portugal;

Calls upon all participating States to break off diplomatic and consular relations with the Government of Portugal and to take effective measures to suspend all trade and economic relations with Portugal.

Apparently, Cuba took the resolution seriously. One might have perhaps argued that the Heads of State or Government had strayed from the path of virtue and that Cairo was an aberration. But 12 years later, when they met in Sri Lanka, the Conference did something worse. It "congratulated the Government and people of Angola for their heroic and



victorious struggle against South African racist invaders and their allies, and commended the Republic of Cuba and other States which assisted the people of Angola in frustrating the expansionist and colonialist strategy of South Africa's racist regime and of its allies".

I hope I have said enough to caution ourselves against getting diverted by the Cuban or Vietnamese red herrings from the pursuit of our path. The Non-aligned world must show greater sense of urgency, in solving their economic and social problems. The seeds of discord are in various stages of germination in the social and political soil of the countries concerned. Because the non-aligned states are continuously involved in their day to day struggle, their fight has been related to factors exogenous to the development of each country. It is right and proper that they should collectively fight against protectionism, against restrictive trade practices inherent in quotas, tariffs, and preferences; and it was right to have fought for transference of capital and technology from the rich to the poor. It is just and proper to fight for sovereignty over resources and for treating the riches of the seas and the oceans as common heritage of mankind rather than a booty for a twentieth century piracy. It is essential that we constantly lay bare the inequalities of the existing international economic order and urge the creation of New International Economic Order. However, all these efforts would carry more weight if we co-operate among ourselves more intimately, and set up institutions testifying to our earnestness in promoting such co-operation, mutual help and support. Viewed from this point of view, the oil rich Non-Aligned States have done very little when compared to the magnitude of the aid they have given to the rich and the affluent.

There is no reason why the non-aligned states should not co-operate in the areas of food, energy, drugs and pharmaceuticals, and materials by creating specific R & D institutions and sharing the results of the research, development and design. Simultaneously, we have to seriously consider the need for democratizing the multilateral financial institutions. If equality is what we are fighting for, internationally, we must consistently fight for it throughout. And if we are to carry conviction we must inform our respective internal developments — political, social, economic and cultural, with concepts of equality.

If governments get frightened by the gigantic nature of the tasks and seek their survival through external props, the Non-Aligned movement would reach a dead end with each government more frightened of its own people than the wolves prowling around. Finally, it seems to me that the structuring of a new international order cannot be a matter of exclusive concern of the so-called Third World. It is even more

urgently needed by the world gripped with structural problems generating economic instability, inflation, unemployment and ecological as well social disequilibria. If this be so, then the Non-Aligned movement must consciously search for new allies among individuals and movements dedicated to the emancipation of human beings from the spiritual malaise with which they are afflicted. The vision of Non-Aligned movement must encompass the entire humanity and its travail. And as a collectivity the non-aligned have extraordinary strength if they would only strain themselves to constantly search for the common denominator of agreement and work out a strategy of self-reliant development. As for us, Indians, we cannot afford to forget our own sources of inspiration without losing our independence of thought, judgment and action. To safeguard it, constant vigil is required.

## ON INDO-PAK TALKS

Well, dealing with Pakistan under the leadership of Mr Zulfikar Ali Bhutto is going to be a continuing problem for us. Now, if we get lost into the alleyways, little alleyways, which Pakistan might create for us, then I do not think we shall be acting wisely. Broadly speaking, Pakistan, as it is constituted today, is a country of about 60 million people. India, on the other hand, is a country of 560 million people. If we examine the economic structure of Pakistan and compare it to that of India, then even forgetting the difficulties we are in today, the broad fact remains that there is no comparison. The sophistication, the strength of Indian industry, the strength relatively even of Indian economy, these are for Pakistan a factor to be reckoned with. Now, Mr Bhutto is the inheritor of a long line of tradition in Pakistan in which Pakistan tried to establish an identity of its own in confrontation with India. It would have been theoretically open to Prime Minister Bhutto when he came to power to jettison the past. But, then, such a revolutionary step would be unrealistic to expect. Therefore, from time to time, we must expect from the present-day Pakistan two themes: a theme of confrontation and a theme of reconciliation. Both will be played. But we must understand that we have to cope with these. Now, it is necessary for Pakistan to play the theme of confrontation, because the initial disparities between India and Pakistan to which I have pointed in the beginning are basically non-negotiable — India will remain a larger country, a bigger country, Pakistan relatively a smaller country. But there is no reason why between two such countries there should not be a long-term basis of friendship based on real equality. Now, the basic principle in Simla was that we tried by our deeds, by our words, our Prime Minister, our leaders who were then present and such of us as were involved in negotiations tried to convince our Pakistani friends that India is not going to profit, take any advantage of the obviously advantageous situation we were placed in 1971. Why did we do that? We did it because we want the Pakistanis to know, to understand, to realize that it is no part of India's intention, that it is not in India's interest to do any damage, to inflict any damage on Pakistan. And the price we paid was a dramatic decision by our Prime Minister to withdraw from 5,000 square kilometres of territory. Subsequently, that was followed by the release of prisoners. Now, all this is a long-term investment in support of long-term policy to gradually try and convince the Government and people of Pakistan that India has a vested interest

Text of intervention in a discussion on "Resumption of Indo-Pak Talks", broadcast by the News Services Division of All India Radio, in its Current Affair Programme on 8 September 1974.

in friendship with that country. Viewed in that light, temporary aberrations on the part of Mr Bhutto, which are predictable, should not upset us. And I will give you an example. It was in April 1973 that Bangladesh and India jointly agreed and announced that we are ready to repatriate all the prisoners of war minus 195. That was in April. But Pakistan did not accept it. Pakistan raised an international campaign. Pakistan rushed to the International Court of Justice. Pakistan was engaged in all kinds of propaganda — and apparently Pakistan has a very touching faith in the efficacy of international propaganda — sent women of prisoners of war to New York, to Paris, to weep and to cry, ignoring the fact that India had already agreed and Bangladesh had already agreed to release 89,999 prisoners of war barring 195. They could have said, all right, release them; as regards the 195 let us talk. And they did not take that position. They rejected out of hand, rejected out of hand the Indo-Bangladesh agreement of 11 April. So this nuclear experiment was a similar kind of thing of which they tried to take advantage. Obviously, psychologically speaking, Mr Bhutto negotiating with India immediately after the experiment, in terms of Pakistan mythology, would have been negotiating from weakness. It is their definition of what is strength and what is weakness. And, therefore, they had to spend some little time to slur over this. And they did it, they did it by saying they have to get guarantees. Very good thing if they get guarantees; but guarantees would be meaningful if it were part of India's intention, as it were, to attack Pakistan. On the contrary, since Simla and Delhi agreements, it is part of India's intention, of Bangladesh's intention to have peaceful relations. And they made sacrifices for establishing those relations. So, Dilip (Mukherji), I would say that these talks, resumption of these talks are not a surprise, that the manner of reconciliation and the resumption are part and parcel of a broad pattern of the behaviour of Pakistan. We witnessed it before, we witnessed it even in Simla. In Simla, when we offered them a non-aggression pact, they rejected it. Why? Because, as part of their mythology, a non-aggression pact with India can only be on a basis of inequality. Therefore, they rejected it. In 1973, when we said we would release prisoners of war, they did not accept it. They carried on a campaign. Ultimately, they came round and we discussed and solved that problem. So I hope that this problem too that we are discussing, it is essentially of a technical nature, but even technical problems must be dealt with in the larger perspective of politics and I hope this we shall continue to do. This is how I see it.

Well, it is always very difficult to anticipate the result of negotiations, but having regard to the subject matter of the talk, namely, resumption of travel facilities, resumption of communications, I should



think that an agreement could be reached. Of course, there are difficult problems in regard to the way the communications facilities have operated in the past and normal communication would require a great deal of mutual confidence in regard to payment of various dues from one side to the other. And I believe this is one of the problems left over from the past. But I am not raising it to create difficulties. I am merely raising it to show that these are things and ought to be dealt with in a business-like manner and given that spirit of dealing with it in a business-like manner I should imagine that the talks should be successful; they may not be successful in one session and I do not know how these negotiations will be dealt with, seemingly they are technical, of a technical nature. But I am sure that we shall always bear in mind that technical problems cannot be divorced from the political milieu. The political milieu, the political approach to it, should always be borne in mind and the political approach of India is that we are determined as a country to continue the process of détente and normalization, that we are in great earnest for the building of a structure of durable peace. We are deeply convinced that unless we do this, the basic problems in the sub-continent, which we all recognize to be our backwardness, our development of our economy, our social and cultural problems, will for ever remain in a dormant state. And since I am sure Pakistanis too wish to have what Mr Bhutto says, cloth and bread and house, so do the million of people of India and Bangladesh. And so, objectively, in the historical perspective, the basic problems of the sub-continent are similar. And once we got over the fears, the hesitations, the difficulties which are understandable, but we must get over them, we can all settle down not merely to the implementation of para 3 of the Simla Agreement and, indeed, those talks are meant to implement para 3 of the Simla Agreement, but really go forward to the wider vision of co-operation, more meaningful co-operation, not merely in political terms but economic terms, reconstruction of our respective countries which is worthwhile. And we hope that actual experience in negotiations from Simla to Delhi Agreements would convince our Pakistan friends that the bilateralism on which we have been insisting is the more sure means of achieving the results than the presence of third parties.

## THE GORBACHEV PHENOMENON

[...] Although the Reykjavik Summit has receded in time and now forms part of the contemporary history, it is still worth recalling the issues raised there and the positions of USSR and USA. From all accounts, Mikhail Gorbachev presented a paper to Ronald Reagan. That paper was in the form of joint instructions to be issued by the President of USA and the Secretary General of the CPSU to their respective delegates to the Arms Control talks in Geneva. Gorbachev had incorporated in it Ronald Reagan's own positions: (1) a zero option in respect of the Intermediate Range Missiles deployed in Europe and (2) reduction of Soviet preponderance in ICBM which the USA had argued as being the cause of Soviet superiority in nuclear weaponry. Gorbachev, therefore, proposed to abolish all Intermediate Range weapons from the entire European theatre covered by NATO and Warsaw Pact alliances. He also proposed a stage-by-stage reduction of ICBMs opening up a vista of a nuclear-free world by the end of the twentieth century.

These proposals set out solemnly on a piece of paper and presented by Gorbachev to Ronald Reagan took both the President and the American delegation by surprise. Why? Because, the Americans, being victims of their own false perceptions, could not believe that the so-called Soviet military-industrial complex would permit Gorbachev to present such proposals. The Gorbachev approach had the additional merit of relating the vision of a nuclear-free world to the logic of the agreement reached in Geneva that there was no winnable nuclear war.

From all accounts, Ronald Reagan was taken aback by the opening gambit of Mikhail Gorbachev. He had no answer to the argument that there was no sense in wasting vast resources on militarization of space if there was no winnable nuclear war and that there was a credible as well as a verifiable way of abolition of nuclear weapons by the end of the century. Logically, therefore, Gorbachev linked his proposals to a commitment on the part of the United States not to deploy space weapons in response to the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI). Ronald Reagan, having found himself in hopeless contradictions, found a way out for stalemating the Reykjavik Summit by taking a fundamentalist position on SDI.

The USA also, in the eyes of world public opinion, put itself in the wrong by not responding to the extraordinary self-restraint shown by the Soviet Union for a period of 18 months by not conducting underground

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nuclear tests. The United States, on the other hand, continued to conduct nuclear tests with a great deal of abandon confirming the commonly held view that these tests were for the development of SDI system.

The Gorbachev initiative at Reykjavik has the merit of being both logical and practical in terms of the imperatives of the nuclear age. As each day passes, Ronald Reagan and his administration find themselves enmeshed in hopeless contradictions. A very large number of governments, as well as ordinary people, are realising that the position of the US administration and that of Ronald Reagan are untenable. An increasingly large number of scientists, both within the United States and outside, are endorsing the view that SDI provides no security of any kind but was merely a device invented by the US military-industrial complex to keep itself going at enormous costs. A few unwary scientists and others fall victims to the delusion that the rationale for the SDI lies in its being the instrument for keeping the United States ahead in the area of science and technology. Such an argument is a piece of disinformation provided by the military-industrial complex.

To those who argue that outlawing nuclear weapons only accentuates the alleged Soviet superiority in conventional weapons, Gorbachev has provided an answer too. Several proposals have been made in response to the Helsinki process, as well as the process of building confidence, which go to establish the proposition that the Soviet Union is ready and willing to consider quite drastic reduction in the area of conventional armaments as well.

If there is no winnable nuclear war and since nuclear war would demonstrably destroy humankind as well as human habitat, the policies pursued by the United States increasingly come into conflict with the aspirations of the people everywhere, including the United States, for asserting not merely the right to life, but the right to fulfilment of that life on this Earth. This position is sensitively expressed in the declaration made in Mexico by the Heads of Governments and States of Argentina, Greece, India, Mexico, Sweden and Tanzania. It is a sort of further elaboration of the now well-known statement of the Delhi Six.

Like the Reykjavik Summit, Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to Delhi too is now part of history. It is legitimate to enquire whether it produced any durable results. So far as we in India are concerned, it clarified many things. First, that the Soviet Union on its part fully understands and endorses the continuing relevance of the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship of 9 August 1971. It was also clear that the improvement in Sino-Soviet relations ought not to be construed as being detrimental to



Indian interests, nor, indeed, should we expect the Soviet Union pull our chestnuts out of the fire for us, India is a proud country, India is a large country and India ought to have the wisdom and the flexibility to deal with China. Indeed, Mikhail Gorbachev would not have made the speech at Vladivostock if he knew that Sino-Soviet and Sino-Indian "knots" cannot be unloosened.

It was, therefore, rather naive on the part of some commentators and even scholars in India to express apprehensions that the Soviet Union will ride rough shod over genuine Indian interests vis-a-vis China and Pakistan. The visit of Gorbachev also enlarged, to a significant extent, the area of co-operation between India and the Soviet Union, and if we shed our delusions, then the co-operation between the two countries in the area of science and technology would also become of very great significance to India's development in a self-reliant manner. Regretfully, in recent years, the entire government actions and pronouncements have reluctantly driven us to the conclusion that self-reliance and its imperatives have ceased to inform government's thinking and policies. But life is a hard thing. It rends asunder illusions. And, under the impact of enormous difficulties which we face and shall continue to face in our trade and balance of payments, we would be driven to reassess the critical importance of self-reliance in which the Soviet Union can play a significant part. Indeed, China too, after having entertained heated expectations about flow of foreign capital and technology, is rediscovering the virtues of self-reliance both in economic and in political terms.

As one examines the unfolding of the international scene, countries taking fundamentalist positions in the area of foreign policy are doomed to enmesh themselves in contradictions and thus, attempt to find a way out by some irrational acts. In the world of today, the United States, more specially, under Ronald Reagan, is having its foreign policy influenced both by religious and political fundamentalism. This is extremely dangerous. The result is that so great a country as the USA, with all its wealth and power, is tending to live outside the structures evolved by human civilizations regulating conducts of states within a framework of international law. To live outside the law might appear to be a macho thing to do, but it hides a moral weakness.

The United States lectures to everyone about morality but practises no known norms of international morality either in the case of Namibia or South Africa or Nicaragua or even Libya. Even vis-a-vis its closest allies, the USA practices unilateralism both in the domain of international relations as well as in the domain of economics. And, the



Irangate affair has, as it were in a flash, revealed the state of weakness. It is not for us to give lectures on morality, but the great people of United States have to understand and make up their minds whether their country's spiritual and moral wealth should be squandered so recklessly by their rulers. Perhaps the great people of America need to draw inspiration from the following immortal lines of Walt Whitman:

Vain is your science,  
Vain your art,  
Your triumphs and glories vain  
To feed the hunger of the heart,  
And the famine of the brain.

All over the world, an increasing amount of attention is being given to what could even be described as the Gorbachev phenomenon. In our view, Mikhail Gorbachev is certainly an extraordinary person. And his place in history will be determined by two factors: First, the accuracy with which he is articulating the needs of Soviet society, living and working in the world of today and tomorrow, and secondly, the positive response he evokes first and foremost from the Soviet people themselves. On both counts Mikhail Gorbachev has shown extraordinary tenacity of will and purpose even in the midst of the rigor mortis of the Soviet political and State apparatus. However, it would be wrong to think of Gorbachev as an accidental or random phenomenon. He has woven together the trends of Soviet society which were expressed by Lenin, Lunacharky, Maxim Gorky, Kruschev, Kosygin, Andropov and Marshal Ustinov. Gorbachev's own contribution no doubt is distinct, more specially, in formulating with great precision the tasks facing Soviet society in the context of the real world of today.

Among all the political leaders in the world, he alone has pinpointed the one single source of human tragedy which lies in men and women, including politicians perceiving reality as refracted through the prism of past thought structure. His thinking processes are, therefore, contemporaneous with the changing reality. In this respect, he is showing extraordinarily fine perception which Marx displayed when he wrote the *Eighteenthth Braumiere of Louis Bonaparte*.

Mikhail Gorbachev ought to stimulate our politicians and more specially, our Prime Minister to rethink about the role of politics in our country. India has all the potentialities of greatness — a greatness expressed in the contentment and well-being of our people and their moral, spiritual and cultural renaissance. Regretfully, we see no signs of any stirrings among our politicians and our politics has been drained of

any moral, intellectual or spiritual impulses. Everything appears to be *ad hoc*, personalized and detrimental to the growth and stability of our institutions. Let us remind ourselves of Gandhi's dictum that no cause can triumph without faithful agents. We should like to put this question to everyone including our Prime Minister: who are the faithful agents for building an India based on Mahatma Gandhi's moral universe, Jawaharlal Nehru's rational universe and the universe of modern science and technology tempered by socialism. And by socialism we mean what Nehru meant when he said that his ambition was to build "a just society by just means".

Ever since the Emergency in 1975, political leaders have been busy in frustrating and destroying our institutions, both state institutions and the political ones too. Our present Prime Minister, far from reversing this trend, has tragically and regretfully only aggravated it. The Vankateswaran affair has no other significance than that it dramatically brings to surface the process of corrosion and destruction of our civil services, including, of course, the foreign service as well. I should, in all fairness, also add that the process has been materially helped by the incidence of a class of venal civil servants. We would submit that no time should be lost in bringing to the governance of this country and to public life an openness in the functioning of the state system as well as the political system.

In the area of foreign policy, we do not seem to possess any thought-through framework of policy or policies. Our relations with China have remained frozen in an emotional cold storage. We need to thaw and unfreeze this relation, but this requires a great deal of thinking. As for our relations with Pakistan, we continue to deal with it with gusts of emotions. The central problem of our relations with Pakistan is that we must help that country and its people in their struggle to emerge with an identity of their own, rather than as a tortured political structure sustained by US perception of varying strategic roles of Pakistan in the Americans global concerns. Even to make SAARC really successful, so that it corresponds to the urges, aspirations of the people of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, etc., we have to do serious homework in preparing a design for development of India and our neighbours within the framework of self-reliance, taking into account the resource endowment of each part and its conversion into the wealth of nations with one criteria in mind, namely, how the wealth thus produced would bring happiness, well being and contentment to the peoples concerned. Without such a vision, SAARC is doomed to die or will become merely a playground for the powers outside the region.

A structure of durable peace in the region of South Asia is mathematical function of contentment of its peoples. Only to the extent that we could elaborate such a design that we can hope to build a structure of durable peace and stability in the subcontinent.

The crisis in Punjab, as it is unfolded up to date, has thrown up the total inadequacy of the Punjab Accord, which was concerned wrongly as an accord for transfer of property, land and water. The political component was totally missing. The dialectics of inner struggle within the Akali Party has laid bare the reality that the Punjab problem cannot be resolved unless there is a national will on the part of Hindu, Sikh and everyone else to put a stop, once for all, to the most dangerous and poisonous acts of mixing politics with religion. This in turn means the establishment of a truly secular state in India and urgently requires the stimulation of the process of secularization of our politics. Unless we do this, India will become enmeshed in strife, based on caste, religion and ethnic groups. It really is as ridiculous as it is medieval that paid employees of SGPC are masquerading as priests to seek to mould politics and to undo the operation of Indian democracy. Viewed from that point, it is about time that we cease to stir up and incite emotions around religious symbols such as *Ram Chabutra* or *Babri Masjid*.

## SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE GULF WAR

In one of his books, the perceptive British historian, Sir Louis Namier, observed that arguments howsoever cogently presented by the weak and supported by facts, are apt to cause annoyance and are likely to be dismissed as mere quibbles. We are intensely aware of this. Nevertheless, we must persist in our endeavour to articulate what we feel and think with full knowledge that we may cause annoyance.

Throughout human history, the wielders of both the spiritual and temporal powers have contemptuously dismissed all those questioning their morality and wisdom, as mere fools and dreamers. We derive sustenance from the assurance of Jesus that some day the Meek will inherit the Earth. We continue to dream that some day humanity will learn, by a process of *reductio ad absurdum* that humanity has reached a stage in its capacity for destruction, where it must either hang together or hang separately. The logic of raw power and the logic of the deepest stirring of humanity in this last decade of the twentieth century somehow remain in a state of unresolved conflict. The recent war in West Asia has certainly demonstrated the logic of raw power. But it has yet to establish a structure of durable peace in this tortured area. It was tortured by janissaries of the Ottoman Turkish Empire. When that Empire rotted from within, because of the venality of its Sultans and the onslaught on it by the British Imperial strategy of riding both an Arab horse as well as a Zionist steed, the peoples of this area felt no relief. On the contrary, the history of this area up to this date is a history of the frustrations of all the components of humanity living in the vast area stretching from Iran to the Red Sea to the Suez Canal, the Mediterranean and the Atlantic coasts.

The application of raw power, in a display of most up to date varieties of technologies, was sought to be camouflaged by making it appear that the war in the Persian Gulf was, in biblical terms, a just war fought under the banner of the United Nations. The result, however, is that the UN as a possible instrument for securing world peace, stability and justice, is severely damaged. Even the high office of the Secretary General of the UN has been damaged.

It is an old maxim that "He who comes to equity must come with clean hands". The obligation on the part of those who speak in the name of equity, justice and law, to abide by the imperatives of these words is greater than of those who, by definition, represent the evil. President Saddam Hussein was represented as such an evil. But can we say, in all conscience, that those who fought this evil in the name of the UN, have

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clean hands? We fear that the wide masses of people all over the world, and more especially in the Arab lands, are today in a more disturbed state of mind than they were at the commencement of the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq. Sooner, rather than later, it is this turbulence in the hearts and minds of millions of Arabs and others, which will count. One fails to observe any sign of wisdom and statesmanship and a long-term view of history amongst the victors.

Familiar as we are with the mindsets of all those who have wielded power throughout the ages, we were left with a feeling of extreme unease as we witnessed the Gulf War. This war has failed to give us either the vision of a new world order or even of regional peace and security. The Gulf War has also brought a sense of unease and disquiet in Europe because it has raised the question of the involvement of NATO bases in a war fought away from the frontiers of Europe. The Gulf War has also tragically brought to the surface both racist and religious fundamentalist undertones. No one looking for a new world order can be attracted by the packaging in which the Gulf War has been presented hitherto.

In a century which has witnessed the decline and fall of the Manchu Empire, the Ottoman Turkish Empire, the Czarist Empire, the Hapsburg Empire, the British Empire, the French Empire, the Dutch Empire, the Portuguese Empire, as well as the impact of human consciousness on the political structures set up in the Communist States, is it realistic to contemplate the possibility of the setting up of the so-called unipolar world based on the might of the United States of America, even assuming that the exercise of that might is tempered by some feeling and concern for the fate not only of this earth but of all humanity at large? The answer should be obvious. The tendency towards unilateralism on the part of the USA will only bring suffering and grief and not Pax Americana. The United States is faced with a serious problem of rethinking and re-evaluating its manifest destiny. Similar questions would confront the European powers as well as Japan.

The American "unilateralism" is not our invention. It forms part of a debate within the United States. We presume that a person like Arthur Schlesinger Jr. would not be accused of being "anti-American". In an article published in the prestigious American journal titled: *Foreign Affairs* in its Winter issue of 1987/88, he has made very thoughtful and perceptive remarks about "unilateralism". We quote below what he wrote then as an exponent of the foreign policy of a democrat:

Unilateralism breeds the arrogance of ignorance, and  
ignorance breeds bad policy....

Unilateralism breeds something more than ignorance: it breeds illegality.

It might be argued that Arthur Schlesinger's critique was in the context of the performance of the Reagan Administration. It is true that both the Secretary of State James Baker III as well as President Bush have effected a change in the style of their functioning. However, we are not certain whether the change of style is translated into a change in substance. The power structure within the United States, whose interests President Reagan as well as President Bush represent, remains essentially unilateralist. That is one reason why we have serious misgivings about the Gulf War ushering in a new world order under the leadership of the United States of America. The policy-making processes in the United States have, for a very long time now, led to the liquidation of the State Department. That Department has been de-professionalized. It has been in a state of siege laid by the Pentagon and the itinerant Presidential Advisers in the National Security Council. In the context of this historic decline of the principal Department of State, we have doubts about Mr. James Baker III imparting to the making of American Foreign Policy the dimension derived from his own personal sensibilities.

Surveying more closely the aftermath of the Gulf War, our serious misgivings about creating a structure of durable peace in that region persist. We see no evidence of wisdom which would harmonize Arab-Israeli conflict, inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the Iranian perceptions of its national interests, as well as Arab nationalism whether expressed in secular terms, or worse still, in religious terms. The United States will also be faced with a serious dilemma about the extent of its involvement in a variety of civil strifes, more particularly in Iraq and elsewhere too. The pattern of such involvement in Latin America, Africa and in Afghanistan upto date has not been seriously questioned. The setting up of American naval and air bases in the region are not an appropriate response to the problems of political and social stability in this entire area.

Anyone contemplating the events leading to the Gulf War cannot but ask the question: How did it all happen? One answer is obvious. It happened because President Saddam Hussein committed a blatant act of aggression on the sovereign state of Kuwait and compounded that offence by annexing that State. This explanation reminds us of the simplistic explanation given at the time of the commencement of the World War I. We were then told that it began because an Archduke was murdered in Sarajevo. In our view, the Gulf

War is one more manifestation of unresolved conflicts of this region since the end of World War I. The British Imperialist strategists maintained some sort of equilibrium in this area on the strength of the British Indian Empire. Indeed, the Persian Gulf was often referred to as the Curzon Lake. No serious attempt has been made by the Western powers as well as the USA to address themselves to the real problems of this region. The real aspirations of the people of this region have never been a matter of concern for the geo-strategists. Consequently, all these structures, built here in the name of security, have collapsed in the past. The Middle East Defence Organization fell apart. The idea that Iran, with the Shahenshah as its head, could give security did not work. The involvement of Pakistan, Iran and Turkey under the cover of "Regional Co-operation" is in shambles and the moral and legal pretensions of the policy-makers were fractured by Turkish aggression against Cyprus and the continued occupation of a part of Cyprus by Turkey. The United States' policy in this region has also wavered. We will call as our witness Arthur Schlesinger Jr. once again. In his article to which we have already made a reference, he has described the anatomy of the vacillation of American policy. We quote below what he wrote in his article from which we have already quoted earlier:

The Reagan Administration first followed a policy of neutrality; then veered toward Iraq, a policy culminating in the restoration of diplomatic relations in 1984; then courted Iran with arms shipments on the grounds of Iran's supreme geopolitical importance to American security; then in order to recover Arab confidence and to pre-empt the Soviet Union, veered toward Iraq again, despite the Iraqi assault on the USS Stark and the death of 37 American sailors.

Then Reagan decided to raise the military stakes in the Gulf against Iran — the very country he had been secretly arming a short time before. This was a decision taken without consultation with America's allies and with only sketchy notification to Congress. There was no evident effort to think through next steps, and the US Navy did not even have the capacity to protect itself against Iranian mines. The reflagging of Kuwaiti tankers — again no consultation with allies — goes far to place the United States in the hands of two countries. Kuwait and Iraq, that have an obvious interest in drawing us into the war against Iran. American naval forces in the Gulf, as a Senate Foreign Relations Committee report put it in October 1987, 'are now, in effect, hostage to Iraqi war policy.' An Iranian



victory over Iraq would plainly be against the interests of the West, but the United States cannot do much by its little self to prevent it. Only as a last resort has the Administration turned to the international instrument it should have used from the start — the United Nations.

It might be argued that the United States followed the advice given by Arthur Schlesinger Jr. by ensuring that the Gulf War was conducted under the auspices of the UN. But, as we have argued, the UN drapery was too diaphanous. We are also left with a feeling of extreme unease by the testimony given by the last US Ambassador to Iraq who was held, mysteriously, incommunicado for no statable reason. The text of the telegram she sent to the State Department reporting the conversation she had with President Saddam Hussein has also not been so far released.

In view of all that we have stated in the preceding paragraphs, it would seem to us that the origins of the Gulf War need further investigation, not because of any idle curiosity, but because one ought to know precisely what considerations weighed with the policy-makers in Washington when we are being given comfortable assurances about the new world order, which is informed by liberty, equality, fraternity and would embrace the real problems of the peoples of the world. As we write these lines today, we see no evidence of either the Europeans or the Americans showing any concern for evolving a viable world order. In the absence of such a world order, we are, howsoever reluctantly, compelled to share the judgement pronounced on the Gulf War by a correspondent of the *Guardian Weekly*, David Marquand, in his article published in the 17 March issue of the journal. He writes as follows:

In the first truly high-tech war in history, the United States has triumphed more completely than at any time since the Union armies crushed the Confederacy. An American war, started by an American President in pursuit of an American objective, has been won, with breath-taking ease, by the crushing weight of American technology. No wonder the Soviet generals are worried.

Overwhelming military superiority went hand-in-hand with overwhelming political pre-eminence. The Arab members of the coalition were American clients. Britain was an enthusiastic American subaltern. Despite mutinous moments at the beginning, France ended as an unenthusiastic one. The rest of Europe was out of the game altogether, divided, confused and lacking in both will and capacity to pursue a policy of its own.



The Soviet Union had a policy, but was too weak to make it effective. The uneasy power balance of the Cold War era is, in short, in ruins and no new balance has replaced it.

On present form, the much vaunted new world order will be indistinguishable from a Pax Americana...a bankrupt world policeman, haunted by the sense of economic failure and anxious to compensate for it, may well be more dangerous than a rich and confident one. And, by a familiar paradox of pure-heartedness, the fact that the United States is not naturally an imperialistic or hegemony-seeking nation makes the prospect of a Pax Americana more worrying rather than less.

Good policemen are not pure in heart, and nor are good world policemen. They know that force has its bitter part to play in human affairs; and because they know this they also know that force should be used sparingly, for limited ends and in limited ways. Cynical, imperialistic peoples like the British and French have absorbed this bleak wisdom into their bloodstreams, though in this terrible century even they have sometimes forgotten it. The Americans never learnt it.

Because they are pure in heart, they cannot fight limited wars. To fight a limited war would be to concede that the enemy is not utterly evil. And unless the enemy is utterly evil, war is not justified at all.

The savage devastation of the South in the American Civil War, the insistence on unconditional surrender in the Second World War, and the demonization of Saddam and dismissal of the Soviet peace initiative in the Gulf War are all part of the same syndrome. In each case, an essentially anti-militaristic people could be mobilized for war only by convincing itself that the other side was vile beyond compare. In each case the result was that only total victory, bought by total destruction, would do.

Such a people simply cannot be trusted with the overwhelming superiority they now enjoy — not because they are wicked or jingoistic or power-mad, but because they are too high-minded and too convinced of their own moral rectitude for a world painted in shades of grey.

If David Marquand's perception that the Gulf War was, as he says "an American war, started by an American President in pursuit of an American objective" is correct, then we can, with a fair amount of

certainly, assert that the United States' Ambassador to Iraq, April Glaspie, carried out her assignment with high professional competence. That assignment could not be any other than leading President Saddam Hussein up the garden path. It is our shrewd guess that the telegram which Ambassador Glaspie sent to the State Department which has still not been made public, must have contained Ambassador Glaspie's report about President Saddam Hussein's intention in respect of Kuwait. It appears to us that throughout the tragic Gulf War, President Saddam Hussein's own political perceptions have proved to be grievously wrong.

His perceptions, born out of the US support during Iran-Iraq war, about US's intentions were tragically faulted. He was also proved wrong in assuming that he could somehow drag Israel out into the arena of conflict and thus turn the war into an Arab-Israeli war. His perception about the response of the people in the Arab lands that they would engage in widespread and intense acts of terrorism was also proved wrong. However, it is not for the first time in history that one discovers that Presidents and Prime Ministers, who ought to know better, do not actually relate their obsessive perceptions to the actual reality. One recalls how Prime Minister of Great Britain Neville Chamberlain perceived that his pact with Hitler would, as he put it in 1938, bring "peace in our time". In less than a year after that famous pronouncement, the World War II began.

In our view, for aught it may be worth, there is a persistent falsity in the perception of geo-strategists of the West that control over the oil riches of the Middle East is necessary for the peace, stability and prosperity of the western world. In our view the western dominance of the Middle East has generated, from time to time, serious explosions in this area. The time has, therefore, come to replace the old concept of dominance by a new concept of building political and economic structures in the Middle East which would not outrage the passionate feelings for freedom and dignity among the Arabs. It is not impossible to contemplate an acceptable international regime guaranteeing free flow of supplies of oil at remunerative prices for its producers. India, Pakistan and Bangladesh ought to acquire a vested interest in ensuring a structure of durable peace in West Asia: We deeply regret that so far we have failed to see a reflection of our vital interests in peace and stability in West Asia in the way we have reacted to the Gulf crisis. The approach has been *ad hoc*. West Asia and North Africa constitute areas of vital concern not only to us in India, but to our entire subcontinent.

We cannot conclude these reflections without observing that President Saddam Hussein did not realize that the military doctrine of the

coalition forces, built up against him under the leadership of the United States, was bound to use "maximum force against the enemy" under the inspiration of Baron von Clausewitz who has now migrated to Pentagon. The declared enemy, of course, was President Saddam Hussein and his Iraq. President Saddam Hussein's seeming assumption that the war would be confined to Kuwait was thus faulted. We, however, in no way justify the vast and terrible destruction wrought in Iraq. The sufferings of the Iraqi people moves us deeply. Indeed, it is an immense tragedy that all the efforts made to "humanise war" which, in a sense began with Henry Dunant's contemplation of the battle of Solferino, have been negated in Iraq. In 1949, a new convention was adopted which was born out of extreme concern for the protection of civilians in times of war. That convention has been torn to shreds in the way the war was conducted over Iraq. The members of the Security Council who authorized "the use of force" have also to answer the question, namely, what parameters they prescribed for the use of such force?

Finally, it seems to us that the Gulf War has once again put on trial the very concept of civilization. Once again in human history, the Pharisees, the Philistines and the scribes have gathered together in an act of crucifying the spirit of love and compassion. We are still hopeful that men and women in all continents of this Earth, endowed with ordinary sensibility, would increasingly contemplate the Gulf War with horror, as the beginning of a world disorder rather than the harbinger of a New World Order. They would also observe with a deep sense of anxiety that the Gulf War has already started promoting bullish sentiments in the Arms Bazaar.

## AFTERWORD

Dear friends, we have had very exciting and interesting interaction in a gathering of ourselves and some of our Chinese friends as well. I am only sorry that I could not be present at the commencement of this seminar and throughout the four day proceedings. But I congratulate the organizers and thank all those participants who have written papers for it, and I thank all of you who have exercised self-discipline this afternoon so that I did not need to cut short your interventions. It was an excellent idea to hold this seminar and I hope we have more such exchanges to improve our understanding of each other.

It is difficult indeed impossible, for me to summarize what has been said. All that I would like to do is put before you some of my own perceptions, my prejudices if you like, that I have accumulated over a long period of time. Some one asked, what is understanding? This is a difficult question and I find wisdom in the Upanishadic saying, *aparadna iti pradna* or, before we understand we should say we do not understand. To admit one does not know is itself a sign of wisdom, especially today when we are dealing with a very turbulent world. I see only disorder today and it requires a very great effort to fashion order out of the present disorder expressed in so many variables, cultural, economic and political.

Today's world involves more than just the structured interaction between governments among diplomats handling inter-state relations. Today, we have this disturbing phenomenon called "people" which does not appear in any lexicon of diplomacy. I have read the history of diplomacy and, though I may be wrong, I have never found a reference to "people" in Machiavelli, or Chanakya or Harold Nicolson or Talleyrand or Metternick or anyone else because diplomacy is the art of negotiations between plenipotentiaries representing their respective sovereigns or sovereign states. There has been a transition from the early modern period of the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to the present day from sovereign to "sovereign state", but in the twentieth century we must also take account of a new and disturbing element called "people". It would be very unwise for anyone, Indian or Chinese or American or anyone else, to ignore the "people". Therefore, it is all the more necessary, as we move toward the twenty-first century and look for a scenario of international order of some kind, to be aware that the key element in structuring world order must be better understanding among *people* around the globe.

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Concluding remarks at a seminar on "Sino-Indian Relations", 1992.



This is easier said than done. That is why the history of diplomacy generally ignores people. I remember a friend of mine in the British Foreign Office, when I was very young, lecturing about the glory of British foreign policy based on balance of power, and what Winston Churchill had said and done, and how the British always came out top. I said to him, "Yes, that is very impressive, but you have not counted the graveyards".

China may expect to be a Great Power in the twenty-first century, but what troubles me is how power is used. So I asked a good friend of mine a classmate from the nineteen-thirties and a distinguished sociologist in China, "What will you do when you become a Great Power in 2049?" Certainly, in the nuclear age international order cannot be structured along the traditional lines of balance of power. It has to be structured around vision, around mutual comprehension, around understanding in the minds of people, with interaction taking place among the wider mass of people, not just at the policy making level. It is a complex problem that cannot be managed just by mathematics.

I had the privilege of being trained in the natural sciences and mathematics, but I know of no multivariate analytical system capable of factoring in as many variables as exist today and producing a solution. So I think we must proceed somewhat empirically in the present day and I think the Chinese are probably more empirical than we are. Our traditional Indian heritage has always admired transcendence and put a high value on concepts such as *ekta* and *anekta* (pluralism) rather than empiricism. I do not think we should discount or pooh-pooh other civilizations as we have pluralism as the cornerstone of our civilization. Sooner or later, millions of people in the towns and villages of China and India will want to know more about each other's civilization. But the world today is characterized by disorder, and in physics there is a term, entropy, meaning a natural tendency toward inertness or disorder.

This is expressed in so many variables that it would take hours to talk about it, but these days we hear a lot about what is called "fundamentalism". Though we hear of Islamic Fundamentalism today, the word fundamentalism originally referred to what happened among American Protestants after World War I, and that is the dictionary meaning of the term. There is so much trouble in the world. In Europe, for instance, there is as yet no viable vision which would cope with the consequence of the utter disintegration of the Soviet Union whose power extended right up to Central Europe, the turmoil in the Arab world extending from Morocco to Egypt to the Persian Gulf and countries like Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, etc, there is not yet emerged a sustainable

view of their destiny. Africa, south of Sahara is in great turmoil arising out of the very arbitrary carving out of Africa at the Berlin Conference of 1884 and several hundred years of cruel racism practised in South Africa. While the United States claims to be a single superpower of the world, its own internal social base is full of conflicts and tensions which the theory of "melting pot" has failed to resolve.

In the South Asian continent itself, there are conflicts and tensions which have yet to be resolved within the framework of a vision enshrined in the Simla agreement which commits us to build a "structure of durable peace in the subcontinent". So far as China and India are concerned, there is a reassuring historical fact that our two great civilizations have lived side-by-side without any conflict whatsoever. However, the conflict of 1962 is still fresh in our minds. Wisdom lies in both our countries realizing that despite this conflict, we have the compulsion of geography of being neighbours and interaction between two civilizations for thousands of years. If we have the wisdom, we can say that let us build around the inherited assets rather than focus a attention merely on one debit item. There is the need for renewal and reconstruction of totality of Sino-Indian relations. And, as we embark on this, we can say to ourselves that we shall promote peace and tranquility as we proceed step by step to diversify or multiply our mutual relationship.

Naturally, in the process of interaction between China and India, we have to be conscious that there has to be a language for communication. Even if we carry on our dialogue through the English language, there must be a realization that the more we learn about each other's history, language and civilizations the more direct and intimate will be the process of communication. I realized this in the course of six months I spent in Pan Munjong in Korea when I had to deal almost every day with Chinese representatives. Very often we found our communications snarled up due to inadequacy of translating Chinese into English and vice-versa. I am therefore making a very strong plea for having in India what Tagore created in Shantiniketan, namely, China Bhavan. We should have studies of Chinese language, culture and civilization in as many of our universities as possible.

There is no alternative to making a long-term sustained effort to understand each other, trying to multiply our contacts with each other at all points of relevance to the lives of people, whether through culture, or economics or science or through periodic interactions with each other. I entirely agree with my friend who suggests that we have more frequent exercises like this, and hope that our Chinese friends will also welcome

"hair down" sessions which is the only way to try and comprehend each other.

It is not necessary or desirable to score debating points against each other. There is a painful past but there is also a much longer historical perspective to consider. Let us not be "pragmatic" in the hateful way of politicians trying to avoid pain by inflicting pain on others. It is not an elevating experience to see at close quarters how human beings get into a mess and ordinary people suffer [...]. So, Madam Tang, do not say that China's foreign policy will never change because it is bound to change with the changing realities inside your country as it has changed so often before in the nineteen-fifties and nineteen-sixties or nineteen-seventies. You are right, Madam, to emphasize your perception of China's national interest as providing a better life for the more than billion people with which China is blessed. I am sure that Chinese, like Indians, want to have food, health, education, culture; would like song and dance and drama, and a good society.

If we are to strive for such a vision of the good society in the future, I can say that no "ism" can respond to the reality of the human condition today. I am unimpressed by the debate over capitalism or communism. I can see what has happened in the twentieth century in China. You overthrew the Manchu Empire in 1911, Madam, and then from 1911 to 1949 China went through great travail and we were with you during this travail. I remember the China Campaign Committees in the India of my youth. I remember Dr Atal and Dr Kotnis. This is also part of our heritage. We have to choose what we want to remember, what we want to forget. There has been conflict, but there is also an earlier heritage, and I am sure that we have to revise some of our notions of logic and diplomacy. The more we meet with each other, the more we talk to each other at various levels, the more we can see a future where millions of Chinese and Indians and others in South Asia and Far East can lead a fuller life, the better we can understand each other.

We have equated Sino-Indian relations with the border and predicated the reconstruction of relations between India and China on a settlement of the border. We have exaggerated, I think, because it should be the other way around. If I have a dispute along the boundary with my neighbour, it is more likely to be solved when my neighbour and I have mutual trust and confidence than by some formula for the boundary. As a wise man said, even if there is a settled boundary, there is nothing to prevent one side from crossing it. European history is full of crossing boundaries. Other histories too are full of crossing boundaries even where they appear to be settled. There is no alternative in this day

and age — when we are only eight years away from the end of the century and millions of people are emerging on the stage of history for the first time — to China and India sitting down as neighbours and making a genuine effort at mutual comprehension.

This is not going to be easy. For example, China must have a reason for what it is doing in Burma, in Pakistan. I would say to China only this, why not use your good relations with Pakistan for better relations among all the component states of South Asia? We must not acquire a vested interest in conflict. Unfortunately, we are all subjected to too much propaganda. Earlier, in the days of "Hindi-Chini bhai bhai" [propaganda] was heard from our friends in the western world who wanted to create trouble. There was the "Peking versus Delhi" thesis. There was also Neville-Maxwell, a great defender of China, whom I once called the legitimate widow of Comrade Mao Zedong to the annoyance of a British friend! But it is true that we Indians have looked at China through western eyes and research done in the West presented in the English language; we have inherited stereotyped images of China as the Middle Kingdom and so on. And I am sure the same is true of the Chinese looking at India as well. The time has come when it is imperative for us to try and understand each other directly. We have to have a direct approach. I am sure that if we can multiply our contacts, renew and reconstruct our relations at all levels, we can set afoot the process of understanding each other. I am confident that in that process we can find a formula for delineating the friendship between India and China. In that hope, let us conclude this seminar and say to each other "let us meet again".



## A TIME FOR CO-OPERATION

Esteemed and respected Vice-president of the Republic of India, Mr K R Narayanan and Smt Usha Narayanan and other distinguished participants, in this little conference, on a rather strange theme of trying to see human destiny not in terms of conflict and competition but in terms of co-operation, and above all in terms of peace. I shall not take much of your time because all of us present here are anxious to hear you the Vice-president in the background of your vast knowledge, experience, and not merely knowledge and experience, but also contemplation of that knowledge and experience in terms of the panorama of human history on this earth.

If I may take a little of your time, might I myself take off on a journey in time, so that past present and future do not remain independent variables, but inter-penetrating phenomena of the story of us, Homo-Sapiens on this earth. I will arbitrarily choose a year not too distant, and not too near either but somewhere in the middle. As I stand here, a year comes to my mind. The year is 1556, and I want to take you with me, on that journey with Time. In my own country 1556 was the year when Akbar the great was ruling; he belonged to the Mughal dynasty. He was sensitive about the diversities that existed in India, of which we are very proud, and he was thinking how to synthesize things. No synthesis can be anything but co-operation. India of that time was under the Mughal dynasty and, accidentally, under a king who had wisdom.

We go East and visit our neighbour China. China then was under the Ming Dynasty. China was in the process of synthesizing, putting together in a co-operative manner their own ancient wisdom associated with Confucious and let us say, something brought from India called Buddhism. But it was the Ming Dynasty. I travel across and go to Japan. Japan, which was Shogunite, which was Samurized. It was still not unified as a kingdom. But the Japanese too were in a process of relating their earlier beliefs, which persist to this day with remarkable tenacity of purpose, Shintoist beliefs, with Buddhist beliefs. It was not until 1868, as recently as 1868, that Japan became unified as a kingdom. That is known in the history of the world as the great Meiji Restoration under Emperor Hiro Hito.

We cross the Pacific. We strike the coast, which is now the west coast, of the United States. All we find is that an exquisitely beautiful naturally endowed country, with indigenous people living in what we like

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Speech delivered at the Seminar on "Co-operative Peace and Development in Asia" on 7 March 1997 at CRRID, Chandigarh.

to call, in anthropological sciences, tribal state of human existence. Although, it still remains a mystery how across the west coast people travelled and struck Mexico and Peru and created patterns of great civilization known as the Maya civilization both in Mexico and in Maeha Pichu.

We cross over to Africa, especially Africa south of Sahara, and find people who are not homogenous, but full of diversity. Having served there in the sixties of this century, I know these are exquisitely beautiful diversities of Ebos and Yerubas, Hozas and Hulanis, Kikuyus the Hultus and Tutsis but tragical these days, who also created a pattern of civilization, one part which is known to be the Banin-Banin civilization. Africa was also connected with the lower reaches of the Nile through a caravan route ending at a place called Timbuktu, which was a centre of great learning.

We go back to North Africa and we find that the great Pharoic civilization had vanished by then. So had the civilizations built on the Euphrates and Tigris. We cross over to what was England and in 1556 Elizabeth had not yet ascended the throne. She was to ascend the throne about a year later after some conflict. We go to Europe, cross over to France, still governed by a dynasty called the Du-Bouis. The centre of Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Europe, were under Hapsburg Dynasty. We find about that time, great conflicts taking place which ultimately ended in the Congress of Westphelia. We cross over and we find that in 1556, the Swedes, the Danes, the Norwegians, engaged most of the time in what is called vandalism in English language. Then we cross over and find another kingdom called the Czarist Empire. Further south we find the Ottoman Turkish Empire and so on. Such was the picture of this world of ours in 1556. Newton was not born. But the human spirit of enquiry had produced new goods. If you read only Needham's book on science and civilization in China, you will find that the Chinese had produced, what is called gunpowder. It had a beautiful aspect because it produced fireworks. But later on in Europe, it was used to kill a fellow human being.

Now, we are three years nine months and a few days to the end of this century. And in this century, if I may be quite personal, out of 100 years of this century, my own life accounts for 83 years six months and 24 days. I am saying this deliberately to sensitize ourselves to Time. Many poets have reflected on this, on our own country, there is an old saying:

*Subah hoti hai, sham hoti hai*

*Zindagi yun hi tamam hoti hai*

A human being ends by just observing the days as dawns and sunsets. Similar thought occurs elsewhere:

*Getting and spending*

*We lay waste our hours*

*Is there nothing in this world*

*Which is ours?*

And if we are going to speak in English, and use the words “ours”, the word “our” not “thine” and “mine” can be conceptualized within the framework of co-operation and not of conflict. We have heard a great deal of even great poetry being written about competition. I am not against competition. But time has now come for co-operation. The time has come, not to emphasize the conflicts but to subsume conflicts within the framework of a mindset which is pluralistic. That is the only message that India has, here in this country, with its myriad languages, songs, dance, drama, history, tradition, gods and goddesses. We have tried to reconcile each identity, respect it and transcend it into pluralistic humanism.

No amount of economic theory, whether rooted in Adam Smith, Ricardo, Marshall and even Karl Marx can give you a clue to what is known as value system. I often ask my economist friends, tell me, is there a partial differential equation for such words called “love”, “compassion” “justice”, “equity”, “good conscience” and so on, so forth. There is none. One cannot say that the future of Homo-Sapiens is a function of ES & T (economics, science and technology). I yield to none in my admiration for science and technology, but disagree with the current fashion, which the people have taken to. As if the entire human destiny on this earth is a mere function of these variables called ES & T and there is no such thing as love, compassion, justice, yearning for love, yearning for justice.

This brings me to the final point that I should like to make. If one is to consider this history, a slice of history 1556 to 1997, we have to observe that despite men endowed with more than ordinary intelligence being in power in Great Britain or in France, or in Germany or in what was the Soviet Union, they could not see that the downfall around the corner. So, in the twentieth century we witnessed the utter disintegration of the British imperial domain, French Imperial domain, Belgium, Dutch, Portugese, Hapsburg, Ottoman, Turkish imperial domains and finally the utter destruction of what was known as Soviet Union about which, a very sensitive couple, Sidney and Beatrice Web, wrote a monumental book called *Soviet Communism New Civilization*, but then they put a question mark. That question mark haunted it for seventy years and ultimately



disintegrated it. What is even more remarkable is that they had all the science and all the technology one would want, but the societal system, utterly disintegrated. Since this institution is concerned with social sciences, it is about time that those who look to the future, whether of this country or of this world, in the context of pressing agenda of the twenty-first century, which has already been prescribed, seek the agenda roots in the whole of their environment. If you are going to look into the environment as the Europeans do, as the conquest of nature rather than co-operation with nature, you have to make a choice. Fortunately, in no Indian language is there a usage called "conquest of nature". We have to live with nature. *Prakriti* (Nature) and *Manushya* (human beings) live together. So that is the agenda, the whole ecological system in their array, affecting the climatic system, affecting everything. Diseases, new diseases, new bacteria are being born; as if that were not enough, then you have the demographic problem, the population problem.

In India we shall be more than a thousand million very soon. We need not talk about China, nor about Africa. But these constitute human beings. It is nobody's contention that they should be confined to incinerators. Each one of them would want food, at least water and some light, and after having some food, water, air, his mind and brain become active and then he or she would ask some questions. Then there is the other half of our race. We may call them mothers, wives, daughters or sisters, but they have an identity of their own and that consciousness is assertive. What shall we do with it, does competition solve the problem or has co-operation some solution? What happens if the women of the world were to say, okay you have gone on all over, centuries after centuries, gone to war and imperial rule and domination and so on. We are now on strike, we will not say marry, we will not bear children. In Japan that phenomenon is appearing, in its nascent form. What do we do? And then there is the question of habitat, on the agenda, where will these people live, how will they live, where will water be available, what sort of energy they will consume and how much? Food, energy and, finally, no human being is perfect and can use properly what every human being is entitled to, unless he or she is educated and cultured. It is the most tragic error we have committed in India of divorcing education from culture. If we are going to construct a future, it can only be through co-operation and in the context of respecting pluralism, because we cannot homogenize this entire humanity into a single mould, even if you wanted to do some genetic engineering or have only test-tube babies.

So, this seminar, even at my age, symbolizes the extraordinary effort we have to make in searching for new paradigm for human existence on this earth where everything has its place. Science,



technology for instance. But what does technology mean? Technology also produces  $H_2O$ , two atoms of hydrogen, one atom of oxygen. You can take one atom out and you can have an atom bomb. You can have bacteria which can heal and bacteria which can kill. You can have chemistry of life but you can also have chemistry of death. So, as this century draws towards a close, and we talk about the future, the twenty-first century and the next millennia, I would submit that a deeper insight into the area called social science would be necessary than we possess today. Among politicians in general I mean, there is some sort of "sex appeal" when science and technology are mentioned; there is total silence when social sciences, sociology are mentioned.

It is the duty and responsibility of our academia, especially in our country, to get rid of their respective egos and to contemplate the panorama of this earth, without which we have no other place, I do not think Indians at any rate will find a place in the Mars or Jupiter. So, we are condemned to live on the earth and the question is whether this earth could be made better by co-operation and an unending fight for peace than by promoting conflicts and differentiation. Finally, it is not an accident, but a symptom of our time, that a country widely advertised as Asian Tiger, called Korea, called an International Conference from 4-7 September 1985, which was called *Global Initiative*. It was called by the chancellor of Seoul University. I thought the Asian Tiger was becoming vegetarian. The theme of the conference was *Global Initiative*, for restoring to the society in this century tolerance, morality and humanism. The only difference I had with the Chancellor was, I said, instead of "humanism" you should have used "pluralistic humanism", because humanism as a word was discovered during the course of the European Renaissance. You know how it was interpreted. Unless there is pluralism, there can be no tolerance. So, if an Asian tiger country is driven passionately — and 98 Nobel prize winners were present at that Conference — to search for tolerance, humanism and morality, then we must devote equal time to these aspects of the human being, society's existence, than we do to what are called the material aspects. That is why this distinguished Chancellor said, there must be search with great passion not so much for utopia but for what he called autopia.

## NATIONAL SECURITY: ASPECTS AND DIMENSIONS

I must begin with an apology. I apologize in advance because I do not have anything new to say on the theme we have gathered to discuss. What is even more distressing is that I do not have anything startling to say which might hit the headlines.

In recent weeks, we have had several discussions on the problems of security in its wide and varied aspects. Only the other day we had a very large assemblage at India International Centre of eminent persons, drawn from the civil services, the armed forces, the academic community and from the press. We discussed the problem of security of our country. That seminar was followed by a seminar under the auspices of my friend Pai Panandikar's Centre. It had a more restricted theme centring around the question whether India should or should not go nuclear. Recently, there was a seminar on the Indian Ocean in which, regrettably, I could not participate.

I must therefore be forgiven if I have a feeling of ennui in discussing security problems once again. It may also be that many of you who are present here might have been present in earlier seminars. And I would not want to go over the ground all over again in order to cause boredom.

And yet I am here. The reason why I decided to participate even at the risk of repeating myself lies in the fact that I have very deep respect and regard for the organization under whose auspices we are meeting. In fair weather and foul, *Sampradayikta Virodhi Committee* has consistently upheld, what is in my view, one of the most fundamental principles on which our state is founded. That principle is contained in the word "secularism" even though it found no place in the Constitution as elaborated by founding fathers. They found it more important to give protection to cow and its progeny than to secularism. The word was introduced as recently as in 1976 in one of the amendments of the Constitution carried out during Emergency.

The word "secularism" and the concept underlying it has yet to get naturalized in India; it is an imported word and we have done violence to it even in the process of translating it as *Dharma Nirpekshita* or *Sarv Dharma Samman*.

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Courtesy speech at a seminar, organized by the Qaumi Ekta Trust and the All India Sampradayikata Virodhi Committee on "Threats and Perils to National Security."

*Secular Democracy*, Independence Number, 1982.

I deeply regret to say that neither *Dharma Nirpekshita*, nor indeed *Sarva Dharma Samman* have anything to do with secularism. These two slogans merely articulate a doctrine of tolerance. It is a tradition and a doctrine handed down to us from the Gandhian era, although it has roots in our ancient history and tradition.

If we are to define secularism as *Sarva Dharma Samman* or *Dharma Nirpekshita*, one must inevitably have at least two religions in a country so that one could exercise tolerance or give equal respect to the contending religions. If this be so, then logically it follows that there would be no need for secularism if India were to be entirely a Hindu country or a Muslim country or a Christian country. Also, one could argue that secularism was an unnecessary word even in the European tradition because each of the European states had only one religion, Christianity. Yet, there are substantial scholarly works on secularism and what it means. And it means a long drawn-out and continuing process whereby the human mind is secularized in the sense that it begins to acknowledge the fact that there are large areas of our society whose problems cannot be considered within the framework of either theological thinking or within the framework of a religious doctrine. Problems become secular.

You might be wondering why I am speaking on secularism and its meaning in a seminar devoted to discussing security problems. I am discussing it precisely because secularism or its failure affects vitally social cohesion in our society, without which we cannot discuss our security. The fundamental basis for ensuring security of any state is its inner unity, cohesion and coherence of the society. A society which is torn between conflicting religions is bound to be incoherent; once it is incoherent, it is an easy prey to internal forces of disintegration and external forces of destabilization.

One does not have to go deep into history to establish the point that security begins first and foremost with assuring internal unity, coherence and cohesiveness of a society. Recall, for instance, how India was conquered by the East India Company. It was, as the saying goes skinned like an onion, leaf by leaf. There is no record in India of any body sounding an alarm signal at the way the East India Company was gobbling up pieces of our territory as it unfurled its flag. The final act of conquest by Britain was no doubt signalled by the mutiny in 1857 but again that mutiny was not fought under the flag of modern nationalism. It evoked no national response in contrast to the response of the Japanese feudal Samurais to American knocks at the Japanese door.

We should also recall the way France fell in 1939. France had a very big army. And there is no doubt that its soldiers were as valiant as



any. They were manning a strong series of fortresses called the Maginot Line. And yet, without firing a shot or fighting a battle, France fell. We know that the collapse of France took place because France fell to internal disruption. Marshall Petain, the hero of the World War I became a collaborator with the Nazis. So did Norway, giving to the English language a new word called Quisling who was a descendent of Vibhishana. Not only Norway and France fell, but the whole of East and Central Europe fell because the regimes there found it "patriotic" to be collaborators with Nazis rather than fight for the integrity of their respective countries. Czechoslovakia was dismembered, bit by bit, by the same processes of causing internal destabilization by promoting Sudetan irredentism. Earlier Austria fell.

I think I have said enough to make the point: *it would be a grave and tragic error on our part if we thought that our security rested on the valour of our armed forces, their armours, etc. No army can fight if its rear is soft.* Consequently, any serious discussion of problems of security must inevitably involve the assessment of the stability of our society, unity amongst its people, the balance between the satisfaction and dissatisfactions in our society. Strictly from this point of view, the vast disparities and inequalities which prevail in our society in economic, social, ethnic and regional terms constitute dangers to our security. I realize that within the broad framework of the time-schedule of the seminar it is not possible to discuss in detail the variety of problems internal to our country. These dangers cannot be met by letting loose our armed forces in Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram. Assam problem is being allowed to fester. The logic of delay would be to drive it underground. And now we have an extremely complex psychological problem represented by Dal Khalsa.

I would be failing in my duty if I were not to say at the very outset that in my view, the security of a country does not rest on the sum total of men and arms and the guns and aeroplanes, but on patriotism of its entire people.

We have also to guard ourselves against the notion that Indian security is entirely concerned, from time to time, with the problems which Pakistan or perhaps Bangladesh might pose for us. There are of course unresolved problems with China which we, theoretically, take into account in considering our problems of security. But in my view the consideration is merely theoretical; when we consider security, our overwhelming preoccupation is with Pakistan. I am not suggesting that this preoccupation is erroneous. After all, we have had four conflicts with that country imposed upon us against our desire and our will and it will be a mistake to forget our historical experience.



It is also part of historical experience that the conquest by Britain and incursions into India by Portugal and France took place by sea route. That is why, the building up of tremendous military bases in the Indian Ocean is a matter which touches and concerns vitally our security. It is not enough merely to go to UN and rest after pious declarations that Indian Ocean be a zone of peace we rest there.

There is also an error in our thinking on the question whether India should or should not go nuclear. It is an error to think of India's nuclear response merely in terms of what Pakistan might or might not be. We have to take into account that China is a nuclear state with an increasing arsenal of nuclear weapons. I am not suggesting that there is as yet an evidence that China's nuclear weaponry is trained against Indian targets. But equally there is no firm assurance as yet that China's nuclear weaponry is wholly benevolent. Similarly, we have to have a very realistic estimate of the situation obtaining in the world today on the building up of nuclear weapons between the two major powers, namely, the USA and USSR not to speak of the nuclear weaponry at the command of Britain and France and the possibility of Israel. South Africa, Brazil, Taiwan and others going nuclear.

I may be forgiven if I take your time in going into some detail about the nature of nuclear weaponry which is now being accumulated every day.

The nuclear weaponry consists of the delivery systems and the thermo-nuclear warheads. Let me, first of all, enumerate the delivery systems. These are:

- Air Launch Ballistic Missiles (ALBM);
- Sea Launch Ballistic Missiles (SLBM);
- Inter - Continental Ballistic Missiles (ICBM);
- Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles (IRBM);
- Medium Range Ballistic Missiles (MRBM); and
- Small Range Ballistic Missiles (SRBM).

In addition to these formidable systems of delivery vehicles, there are, in addition, the bomber-based nuclear warheads and there are, of course, a whole package involved in what is called the anti-submarine warfare system (ASWS).

As if all the systems which I have just described are not enough, we have some additional interesting ways of delivering nuclear warheads. These are:

Multiple Re-entry Vehicle (MRV). This vehicle carries a

cluster of nuclear warheads in a single ballistic missile. The MRV warhead individually targeted.

- Multiple Independently Targeted Re-entry Vehicle (MIRV). You might have guessed, this vehicle carries a cluster of nuclear warheads in a single ballistic missile. It acquires the capability of having each warhead aimed at a distinct target.
- Manoeuvrable Re-entry Vehicle (MORV). This is a truly marvellous thing because a missile-launched nuclear-warhead acquires the capability of adjusting its course in such a manner as to evade the impact of defending weapons and to appear directly on top of its target. The extent of accuracy achieved by this system makes it a potential first strike weapon.

You might perhaps think that we have exhausted all possibilities. Unfortunately, this is not so. We have in addition, what are called tactical nuclear weapons which are designed to be used in combat within a designated military theatre where conventional war is taking place.

Human ingenuity has gone further in giving us the possibility of neutron bombs which are rather merciful in their character. They will destroy us human beings, but show great respect for property — as one shows to the Gods.

I do not want to add to your joyous mood by telling you what is in the offing. And what is in the offing is the entire technology of space warfare based on laser beams/and particle beams. The idea of the laser beam is to direct the beam towards incoming nuclear weapon so that the outer casing of the weapon would melt. However, this is obviously not enough. What is necessary is to destroy not merely the outer casing but what is inside the casing, namely the nuclear material. For that, particle beam weaponry is in the offing.

Let me now spend a little time in giving you an idea of the destructiveness and range of the delivery system and the nuclear warhead. Without going into the quantitative details of the arsenals possessed by USA and USSR, let me give you an example of the kind of weaponry there is. The USA possesses an intercontinental ballistic missile called Titan II. It has a range of 7,250 miles. It can carry five to 10 megaton of thermonuclear warhead. Please remember that one megaton is equal to one million tonne of TNT. The Soviet counterpart of Titan II is SS-9, which has a range of 7,500 miles and can carry warheads of 18 megatons 25 MT or three, four or five MT. There are other ICBMS with varying distances and varying warheads.

Let us have a look at the long-range bombers. The Americans have a long-range bomber called B-52D/F, which has a range of 11,500 miles with a maximum weapon load of 60,000 lbs. The Soviet Union has a bomber TU-95, with a range of 7,800 miles with a warhead load of 40,000 lbs. I need not waste your time in telling you something about the nuclear weaponry which France, China and Britain possess.

It really is quite impossible to imagine what would happen to our civilization if a nuclear war were to break out. In the language we use every day, we describe this as "holocaust". Most of us shrink away from even facing this eventuality. And yet, one must endeavour to exercise one's imagination to see what it all means. Millions of young men and women asserting their will to live are marching in Europe, in America and in the Soviet Union demanding an end to nuclear weapons. There is not a stir in our country as if the vast accumulation of nuclear weapons does not concern us: as if we would be saved from the holocaust by some act of miracle. If we believe this, it would be a tragic error on our part. In point of fact, we are extremely vulnerable. There are no guarantees on which we could rely. There is no reasonable ground to hope that we would be saved.

The indirect effect of militarization of economies is even more fateful for us, in so far as we seek to depend increasingly on flow of capital and technology from the western world to fertilize our development. And not merely our development, but our capacity to earn, by means of trade, in a world where one ought to see the extraordinary difficulties experienced by the European and Japanese allies of the United States in respect of their access to American market; or the difficulties the Japanese are experiencing in respect of their trade with Western Europe. One ought to see how USA seeks to solve its problem at the expense of even its Allies. Just witness the exchange of uncomplimentary messages on the question of sale of grains to USSR and the impediments placed on the Gas Pipe Line project.

However, one must try and imagine what the word "holocaust" approximately means. Since there is no way of enacting it, one can only understand it in terms of extrapolating the only experience we have, namely that of the use of fission nuclear weapons over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Even at the risk of tiring you out, I must refer to a book recently published by an American author, Jonathan Schell. The book is titled *The Fate of the Earth*. There is a description in it of what really happened on 6 August 1945 at 8.16 a. m. when "the fission Bomb" with a yield of only 12.5 kilo tons was detonated about 1900 feet above the central section of Hiroshima. This little bomb would today be classified among the

category called “tactical nuclear weapons”. But this little bomb enacted the following scenario and I quote from Schell's book:

In that instant, tens of thousands of people were burned, blasted, and crushed to death. Other tens of thousands suffered injuries of every description or were doomed to die of radiation sickness. The centre of the city was flattened, and every part of the city was damaged. The trunks of bamboo trees as far away as five miles from ground zero — the point on the ground directly under the centre of the explosion — were charred. Almost half the trees within a mile and a quarter were knocked down. Windows nearly 17 miles away were broken. Half an hour after the blast, fires set by the thermal pulse and by the collapse of the buildings began to coalesce into a firestorm, which lasted for six hours. Starting about 9 a.m. and lasting until late afternoon, a “black rain” generated by the bomb (otherwise, the day was fair) fell on the western portions of the city, carrying radioactive fallout from the blast to the ground. For four hours at mid-day, a violent whirlwind, born of the strange meteorological conditions produced by the explosion, further devastated the city. The number of people who were killed outright or who died of their injuries over the next three months is estimated to be a hundred and thirty thousand. Sixty eight per cent of the buildings in the city were either completely destroyed or damaged beyond repair, and the centre of the city was turned into a flat, rubble-strewn plain dotted with the ruins of a few of the sturdier buildings.

In the minute after the detonation the day grew dark, as heavy clouds of dust and smoke filled the air. A whole city had fallen in a moment and in and under its ruins were its people. Among those still living, most were injured, and of these most were burned or had in some way been battered or had suffered both kinds of injury. Those within a mile and a quarter of ground zero had also been subjected to intense nuclear radiation often in lethal doses. When people revived enough from their unconsciousness or shock to see what was happening around them, they found that where a second before there had been a city getting ready to go about its daily business on a peaceful, warm August morning, now there was a heap of debris and corpses and a stunned mass of injured humanity. But at first, as they awakened and tried to find their bearings in the gathering darkness, many felt cut off and alone.



In a recent volume of recollections by survivors called *Unforgettable Fire* in which the effects of the bombing are rendered in drawings as well as in words, Mrs Haruko Ogasawara, a young girl on that August morning, recalls that she was at first knocked unconscious. She goes on to write:

How many seconds or minutes had passed I could not tell, but regaining consciousness, I found myself lying on the ground covered with pieces of wood. When I stood up in a frantic effort to look around, there was darkness. Terribly frightened, I thought I was alone in a world of death, and groped for any light. My fear was so great I did not think anyone would truly understand. When I came to my senses, I found my clothes in shreds, and I was without my wooden sandals.

I wish I could go on quoting from this book, but I must resist the temptation.

Now imagine what will happen if instead of bursting a fission bomb with an yield of only 12.5 kilo-tonnes, we have a fusion bomb with let us say, only one mega-ton capacity, i.e., a million tons of TNT instead of just a few thousand tonnes.

And now let us look at the Indian Ocean. Dominating over our peaceful trade routes, be they via the Cape of Goodhope, or through Suez Canal, there is the Simons town base in South Africa. There is the base at Diego Garcia. There is the build-up of a base in an island off Oman. There was an attempt to change the regime by South Africa in the Sychelles island. Can we assume that all these bases would remain benevolent concentrations of military and nuclear power? Our security demands and the responsibility lies heavily upon the shoulders of our political leadership to make our people conscious of the dangerous world in which we live and the brooding menace of competitive armament and of nuclear weapons. We should generate in our country a movements more impetuous than what obtains in Europe and America which would demand, at first, control of nuclear weapons, then, reduction and then disarmament. We are not doing any of these things. We are living in a world of unreality. There was a time when we took active interest in matters concerning disarmament. Alva Myrdal, who is a friend of our country, observes the fact that India has taken a back seat in the debates concerning disarmament in Geneva. Even if we were to reactivate our passionate concern for disarmament, that concern would remain merely at a diplomatic level unless it is backed by a movement of our people. On this subject, there ought not to be any division of ranks along political lines.

It is argued with seeming wisdom that because we have had no nuclear war since what took place in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the guarantee lies in the regime of the so-called Mutual Assured Destruction or in the concept of limited nuclear war. Even assuming that, conceptually mutual assured destruction is a guarantee against the outbreak of a nuclear war, the question still remains at what precise level the equilibrium of assured destruction has to be maintained? The tendency is to escalate the level of this equilibrium. The re-armament programme which the present US administration has undertaken is designed to do this. And when one considers that nuclear power depends so heavily on information system provided by computers, one is horrified to discover how wrong computers can go at times. As many as on three occasions in the last couple of years, as Jonathan Schell records, "American nuclear forces were placed on the early stages of alert: twice because of the malfunctioning of a computer chip in the North American Air Defence Command's warning system, and once when a test tape depicting a missile attack was inadvertently inserted in the system. The greatest danger in computer generated misinformation and other mechanical errors may be that one error might start a chain reaction of escalating responses between command centres leading, eventually, to an attack."

As for the premise on which rests the theory of a limited war, it too is misleading. The idea that nuclear hostilities can be halted at some new equilibrium before all out attacks have been launched cannot be sustained, because the decision following even a limited nuclear war would be a human decision and one cannot precisely calculate how the scenario would work out. We are, therefore, nursing illusions when we talk about limited nuclear war.

I hope I have said enough to create among us a sense of extreme urgency that the entire question of resumption of detente, the question of control of nuclear weapons, the question of nuclear disarmament, the question of limitation even in the field of conventional arms, are matters of even more concern to a developing country like India, than it concerns Europe, America and the USSR.

However, the series of initiatives taken by USSR designed to limit nuclear weaponry and the latest proposal made by the USSR unilaterally renouncing the first use of nuclear weapons deserve understanding and sympathetic response. It is interesting that men like George Kennan, Bundy and others have welcomed the Soviet proposal. Four German specialists have argued that the only defence Western Europe has against Soviet conventional attack lies in the threat of using

nuclear weapons which would be denied if NO FIRST USE was agreed to. However any serious examination of the question of the theory that Soviet Union has been poised for all these years to carry out an attack by conventional means would not bear critical examination. And even if the Soviet Union were poised for a conventional attack against Western Europe, the idea that it would be deterred by a threat of nuclear weapon is to say the least based on unverifiable assumption. The answer would lie in discussing seriously the limitations of conventional arms in Europe rather than use the argument of alleged Soviet intentions for a continuous escalation of nuclear arms race.

I hope I have succeeded to some extent in generating, at least, a feeling that our country needs to sit up and take notice of the total global environment in which we live and in the midst of which we have to conceptualize the problems of our security. This is all the more necessary because we continue to regard the problems of our security by merely extrapolating the experiences which we have had during the last 35 years with Pakistan. All our conflicts with Pakistan have been of limited duration. And at the end of each conflict we had to accept either the arbitrament of the Security Council or a friendly intervention on the part of the Soviet Union at Tashkent. In 1971, we had of course the limited objective of going to the assistance of the liberation movement in Bangladesh.

The result of our experience of conflict with Pakistan has been that our armed forces are under the impression that we shall be required to fight for a period of three to four weeks during which they are not to lose an inch of our territory. This very directive to our armed forces has in fact prevented us from using our essential strength vis-a-vis Pakistan which lies in the greater depth that we command as against Pakistan. It also lies in far superior industrial potential of our country. Our armed forces being under the compulsion of not losing an inch of our territory are prevented from using space for manoeuvre. Expecting them to fight only for a period of three to four weeks we put a premium on Pakistan's borrowed strength. It will thus be seen that even within the framework of a conflict limited to Pakistan, our minds are out of touch with the real requirements of security of India. The civilian population in our country is dangerously under the impression that the security of India is a matter of concern only to our armed forces. And that they can carry on their business as usual. I have often wondered to myself what would be the state of the morale of the citizens of Delhi if couple of bombs actually were to fall on our capital city. I recall my experience of the first Nazi attack over London in 1940 September which, despite its range and extent, helped to boost the spirit to fight amongst the wide populace. This question of the spirit of the



people to be one with the armed forces is always a vital part of any security doctrine a country might have. No political party in India has given any thought to this aspect of the problem. Nor, indeed, have we given any thought to what response India would make if we were subjected to, let us say, a nuclear blackmail.

I began by referring to the problems of secularism as it was meant to be one of the cornerstones of our state structure and of our society. I have not touched upon the economic component of our security problem. Vietnam experience and the aftermath of the Korean War I personally witnessed as member of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission show that there are no exact correlations between the economic indicators of a country and the capacity of the people as a whole to fight for their national identity. Nobody can say that Vietnam was a country with any rates of growth worth talking about. And yet, for a period of 30 years men and women and children in Vietnam fought heroically, magnificently for the identity of their country. The question which arises is: have we ever considered the problem of security of India in larger dimensions than Indo-Pakistani war? Since we are living in a highly unstable and turbulent world, we ought to, in my view, think of our security in wider dimensions.

If, as I have argued, our thinking on our security is dangerously defective, so is our thinking on problems of our development. We have tended to think of our economic development purely in terms of investments we make. Spend the money and the rest will follow. It was a distinguished Nobel Prize winner, Simon Kuznets, who made a profound observation that economic growth which expresses itself in terms of production of increasing number of goods and services is a product of complex interaction between technology, ideology and institutions. Viewed in this light the simplistic view that growth is merely a matter of spending money and making investments is both primitive and non-productive. Probably because of this our economists now talk about an alarming increase in the capital-output ratio over a period of years. This means that while we are putting in lot of inputs by way of capital, we are not getting returns commensurate with the inputs. In this simple ratio we find reflected the deficiencies, defects and distortions in our society. Much of the so-called capital-input wastes away in non-productive use. There are wastages all over. A large country such as ours, which is short in capital resources, must bend over backward to prevent such losses, wastages, pilferages and corruption. We have another kind of dilemma coming up in our economic structure. For instance, we find that in earlier years there were enough savings in our country, the savings rate is now as much as 19 to 21 per cent of our gross product. And yet, we find that



the productive investments do not reflect the savings rate. What really is happening? One could guess by observing the behaviour pattern of the new rich classes in our country who have developed extraordinary propensities for displaying conspicuous consumption and for salting away money in all kinds of unproductive channels.

I do not want to take much of your time and I would like to conclude by saying that any realistic consideration of the problems of security should not rest with merely saying that we are spending Rs. 5,000 odd crores on our defence budget but by taking into account the complex of inter-relationships between various segments of our existence, namely, social, political, economic, ideological and institutional.

## INDIA IN THE NUCLEAR AGE

Mr Chairman and dear friends:

I have deliberately chosen this subject for this evening's talk because in my view, for what it is worth, I have a feeling that in our country there does not exist that intensity of awareness on the most burning issue of our age and of our time. This is posed by the emergence of nuclear weaponry in the arsenals of a large number of countries. Whereas in Europe today literally millions of people belonging to all persuasions are deeply disturbed by the logic of nuclear weapons and are joining together, protesting, marching. And even in America there is a large number of people around all political frontiers, including bishops, archbishops, academia, students, men, women. In our country I (daresay) that there is either no awareness of the dangers to which our country is exposed or we are in a state of indifference, which is even more dangerous, to the world situation as it exists today. We are so deeply absorbed in our internal affairs that I have a feeling that if we do not have at the same time an intensely urgent, an intensely intelligent understanding of what is involved we shall pay a very heavy price for our non-understanding and that of lack of any reaction. And this is so despite the fact that Prime Minister Indira Gandhi announced the other day at the end of the conference of the non-aligned countries which was held in Delhi that the non-aligned movement is the biggest peace movement. That is one thing to say and quite another to observe that there is hardly any movement in our country. And so I thought that I will spend a little time in trying to explain to the extent I know what precisely is the situation in which our country in the world finds itself in the year 1983.

It is argued, and argued with a great deal of historical justification why man must have wars. Ever since the dawn of history human beings have engaged in wars. It is even argued that war is merely an extension of aggressiveness which is the responsive part of human nature — aggressiveness, aggrandizement at the expense of somebody else. Our own history is in the mythology or reality in the story of gods — the Mahabharata is a great war; the war carried out by Ram against Ravana is a war which has gone deep down in our mythology. But even outside mythology this country has witnessed great many wars. One of the most famous ones is by Ashoka himself his — attempt to conquer Kalinga. As a remorse he felt the devastation caused by this war and sought conversion to Buddhism. But wars we have witnessed any number in this country. Maratha wars, Sikh wars — both kinds of wars. And if it is in our country so too in the world at large from the dawn of human civilization

there have been wars. Romans wandered all over the world conquering England In 55 BC; they penetrated deep into what is now the Middle East. They conquered good bits of Europe. There are other kinds of wars. In more recent times Europe witnessed what is known as 30 years war. There are wars between tribes and wars between clans. There is war generated by the tremendous urge for expansion. Wars brought by Chengiz Khan, by the Mughals riding on horseback right through the heart of Europe. All the wars, even though they lead men to death and destruction, are nevertheless local in character. Many more human beings survived war than those who died in wars. When sovereign states appeared out of the earlier tribal wars, first of all in Europe, then it was argued by Machiaveli, Kautilya and above all by the great German philosopher of wars, [Clausewitz] said that war was a legitimate instrument in the hands of a sovereign state to pursue its policies.[...] Their diplomats failed to negotiate what you regarded or what a state regarded as its interest or its security. Soldiers took over. Diplomats and soldiers are the two sides of the coin. Each designs to promote and protect the interest of state.

This brought us right upto the Second World War. All wars upto the Second World War are classical wars fought by sovereign states in defence of what they conceived to be their interests. No doubt the range and extent of damage inflicted, the number killed in wars depended on the technology of that war. The Munghal horsemen merely brought a new technology of war, which was called swiftness. Earlier wars were fought by foot soldiers, one of the earliest ones on some elephants. But in the speed of the elephant compared to the speed of Mughal horsemen, there was a qualitative difference. Gradually science and technology gave new instruments of war. Swords replaced guns, guns were refined into huge artilleries, machine guns, rifles, tanks, aeroplanes and in the Second World War flying bombs, called the bombs. And millions died In the Second World War — 20 millions in Russia alone. And its range and extent was wider than that of the First World War.

It is equally true that millions more survived. Millions more the survived to enquire into that war, to write the history of that war, to write the diplomatic history of that war, how it came about. And all this was true untill 5 August or is it 6 August 1945 at 8:15 a.m. On that day, at that hour in the morning when the Japanese were waking up, assembling together to face the day, and to have breakfast, something happened. And the world came to know that the first plutonium bomb of a small number of kilogrammes was dropped on Hiroshima and 70,000 instantly died. The United States of America dropped this bomb not out of military necessity. It is now a universally acknowledged fact that the Japanese were already

suing for peace. Americans dropped that bomb for two reasons. Firstly, to ensure that in organizing the peace treaty of Japan they had a decisive voice, to the exclusion of Soviet Russia. And secondly, to prevent, unlike In Europe, surrender of Japan to Soviet Union and the United States of America and allies, although all of them were allied at that moment. It was, therefore, a political decision and not a military decision. In fact, Eisenhower, a General in the Second World War, and a subsequent President of the United States of America, recorded in his autobiography that the United States could not perform its global mission without becoming a garrison state, unless it had the monopoly of atomic weaponry. This to my way of looking means only a global empire or empirical domain ordinance. The story which unfolds itself is a story onwards from August 1945. And the story is of action and reaction . This also we know that US trained [...illegible...] who was until yesterday an ally in 1947 once in Northern Iran; second time in the case of Stalin's assertion that Soviet Union has right of access to the Black Sea and should have special rights. On both occasions [...illegible...] Stalin withdrew from Iran and was left alone. [...illegible...] However, in 1949 three years after Hiroshima and Nagasaki the Soviet Union developed a nuclear weapon. There was a debate even amongst scientists, which is now recorded by a man called Sebinario, (he has a book on Openheimer), about the anguish felt by scientists at the turn which the atomic energy was taking in destruction on an unprecedented, massive scale.

Be it as it may it will take a long time to change the history of the evolution of nuclear weaponry. But you must know what it consists of. Nuclear weaponry consists of two things — one is called the delivery system, and the other is called the Probing, the charge, the atomic charge. Today, as of now, the delivery system consists of an Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM), which has a range of seven to eight thousand miles and can reach its target in 40 to 45 minutes. There is another thing called Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile which has a range of three to four thousand miles and can reach, in terms of the latest technology of Pershing Missiles which Americans are developing, in four to five minutes. Apart from ICBM and IRBM, there is the MRBM, the Medium Range Ballistic Missile and finally, there is the Small Range Ballistic Missile which is called the theatre nuclear weapon, which can be used in wars of short distances, kept with atomic warriors. As if this is not enough there are the ALBM (Air Launched Ballistic Missile) represented by a B-1 or B-2 bomber. B-1 bomber is being developed by the US and a back- fire bomber by the Soviet Union. That is not enough. There is of course the Sea-Launched Ballistic Missile, carried by the atomic-powered submarines which can remain submerged at a time for more



than a year or two years and can fire cruise missiles carrying atomic weapons. This is not enough; there are another set of missiles, called Multiple Independently Targeted Reentry Vehicle which has a target. And there is a further sophistication of that called Manoeuvrable Independently Targeted Reentry Vehicle.

Whereas the Hiroshima bomb, a plutonium bomb, was a few Kilotons, the ICBM, the IRBM, the SLBM, are all missiles which can carry anything from 15 to 10 megatons and the Multiple Independently Targeted Vehicle at a time can carry four warheads, may be of five megatons. One megaton is equal to one million tons of explosives. And you know what it takes to kill a human being. Not a ton, not a kilo, but fraction of a gram. Today there are 50,000 nuclear weapons. Today such is the killing power of nuclear weapons, and each one of us has his share. That share is very generous. You and I have a share of two tons each all over the world, every human being, man, woman and child.

In addition, there is a development of neutron weapons which have a multiple effect, that only destroys human beings and not property. It is a radiation bomb. There are prospective developments of militarization of space through laser weapons and particle beams. [...Illegible...]. This is maintained by the doctrine, which is called Mutual Assured Destruction. You might have noticed that Mutual Assured Destruction in short is MAD. For the first time this was a kind of equilibrium in the hands of Soviet Union and United States, each time this escalation took place. It is a matter of record that the Soviet Union suggested a halt to it. The Americans were the first to invent MIRV, Multiple Independently Targeted Reentry Vehicle. The Soviet Union proposed a ban on it. The Americans refused. The Soviets proposed in the Security Council that there is enough equilibrium between them to destroy themselves. What does Mutual Assured Destruction mean? That if a state initiates nuclear attack the second state is still capable of inflicting unacceptable damage. Then the Soviet Union proposed a gross reduction of 10 per cent in the expenditure on arms to be devoted to a development fund. The United States rejected it. The Soviet Union proposed creation of a psychological atmosphere of not escalating the arms race by undertaking "No, first use". The US rejected it. The Soviet Union proposed a freeze. "Let us stop here not develop it further. Let us not escalate the level of arms race". It has been rejected.

On the contrary, and this is the reason why the whole of Europe is in great turmoil, and will be more in turmoil in the months to come, if the development of a doctrine that Mutual Assured Destruction is not good enough, that it is possible to win a nuclear war. There are scenarios

about it in which it is said that if you build large underground shelters in which human beings could live for two years and they could be provided with clean air and food, then we could survive any nuclear war. All these doctrines emanate from the United States of America. It is causing deepest and gravest criticism (sic) in the relations between USA and its European allies. But above all we have now the evidence of Mr McNamara, the former defence secretary in Kennedy's government, of Mr George Kennan who was Ambassador in the Soviet Union, of Mr George Burner. A large number of people in the US, about 50,000, rallied the other day in Washington in August demanding freeze, peace, and joy.

Human control over war and peace is gradually diminishing because of the Intermediate Range Missile which takes four minutes to its targets and fully being deflected on a Radar, the decision-making must be left not to a human beings but to machines. Another thing which is happening is the economic, political and social consequences of this range and extent of contemporary armament. Six hundred million dollars is spent on it. In America, a tank which is a traditional [weaponry], costs, 2.8 million dollars. And one of the consequences is economic consequence — militarization of the economy. Large investment of Science and Technology in war preparations; the impoverishment of civilian sector economy; large unemployment which is now of the order of 13 per cent among general Americans and 19 per cent among Black Americans; and a general recession in the economy of the whole of Western Europe and America.

It affects us directly. Because you might have heard that we are the Third world as a whole. Not only the Third world, but increasingly the European countries, too are deeply concerned by the short- and long-term economic consequences of nuclear weapons. It is now realized that the nuclear weapon is not a weapon in any traditional sense of the term. It is a weapon which cannot be used; it is a weapon which if used can cause, what is now called a holocaust. Indiscriminate destruction of not merely human life, but economy, our earth, our trees, our rivers, our mountains and globally. There is no scenario to suggest that in the event of a nuclear war, India will be excepted. The development across her frontiers, in the ocean frontiers, the scramble for the development of bases, whether they are Diego Garcia, Oman, Kenya, Somalia and the continuous tensions in the Middle East, the existence of Rapid Deployment Forces, the build-up of a big naval confrontation are dangerous to us. And we live as if nothing is happening. It touches our development; it touches our national security; and in such times, hypertension. And we must equally realize that, though this build-up of arms is going on between the so-called superpowers, the history of the

last 36 years is not a history of one war between them. It is a history of 138 wars, out of which 120 have been fought in the Third World. Is that an accident? Third World countries, whether it is Palestine, the Middle East, Africa, Angola, Vietnam, Korea and the three Indo-Pakistan wars, are the product of a diplomatic strategy of expansion of influence — political, social, economic influence.

Today, therefore we have to recognize that this developing situation in the world, in a nuclear age is fantastically dangerous, unprecedentedly dangerous. And it will take less than 10 minutes to destroy good parts of India. And what is our response?

We are as a country surrounded by our neighbours where tensions mount. Pakistan is in the midst of great internal turmoil. Bangladesh, another neighbour is in the midst of great internal tension. And the danger is that each internal tension, out of the evolution of its own domestic policies, becomes an externalized conflict. In Srilanka, it is externalized by a conflict between the Sinhala and the Tamils. In Pakistan it has been traditionally externalized in the name of Kashmir. In Bangladesh it is externalized in the name of Farakka and other factors. When it is externalized it effects us internally. A situation in Srilanka causes eruptions in Tamil Nadu, and the rest of India. A situation in Pakistan causes eruptions in India, affects a large number of people — Muslims, Hindus. A situation in Bangladesh is a big factor in our sensitive problem in Assam. Therefore, when one talks of struggle against what are called external forces, we find that this struggle spills over internally within us.

Pakistan events influence us, Srilanka events influence us. And if you remember what happened in 1971, what was internal to Pakistan overflowed and affected us. The only way to meet the external threats in the dangerous age of nuclear wars is not first of all to have a big army of two or three million people, however necessary it might be. But the defence of the country begins by the defence of its rear. A soldier, howsoever valourous and howsoever possessed with most sophisticated weapons, cannot fight well if its rear is not secure. That is military history. We do not know, we do not understand, we do not think.

The cohesion of the rear India fought for was for our economic, political, social integration. And if one were to single out one factor which historically and today destabilized us, it is our enemy disclosed and undisclosed. It is the tragic habit of all thinking in narrow grooves of which *sampradayikta* is a general name. If we are going to be enmeshed within ourselves of caste against caste, of religion against religion, of region against region, then it is obvious that a terrible tragedy is going to enact



itself again in the history of India of the internal softening of the rear where, even the most valiant of armed forces cannot fight. And that is why I thought that I should talk about *sampradayikta* and its dangers not in abstraction but seen in a wider sense. Because in our society today, despite what we say, it can operate upon every divisive element of our society. And it is the duty of those who say they are our leaders, and [it is the] duty of those who say they are citizens, [to fight it]. Because there comes a time, when the destiny of a country has to be taken in hand by the citizens and a country gets a government it deserves. And if our people are not interested in anything at all except the little problems of today which, they think can be achieved by promoting *sampradayikta*, by displaying their badge of caste, creed, religions, region, language then I am sure, as we go along from 1983 to 1984 we shall be in a mess. And it is not enough to leave everything to the government. If the citizens of India, both individually and collectively, face up to their historical responsibility, they have to understand that India, neither in history nor in contemporary times, can live an isolated life. Throughout our history we have been with the people who have come and gone; ideas have travelled; cultures have travelled; India is not isolated. It is so geographically located, as our neighbour is China, our neighbour is the Soviet Union. Today distance is annihilated. An atomic bomb reaches its target in five minutes. In such times, to think in narrow terms is to plan our own self-destruction. I hope, dear friends, in so far as you say you are thinking human beings you will go back, ponder, study and reflect on the situation.



## NIGERIA A BRIEF SURVEY

When the scramble for Africa was legitimized at the Berlin Conference of 1885, Britain's possession of certain territories watered by the Niger and Benue complex of rivers was confirmed. Bounded on the North by the French Possessions of Niger and Chad, on the East by the German Cameroons, on the West by French Dahomey and on the South by the Gulf of Guinea, those territories were unrelated to one another either by tradition, history, language, religion, race or culture. In 1914, the Colonial Office joined them together under a Governor-General and this newly-created entity was christened as Nigeria.

Despite the merger, Nigeria was not administered as a single unit. It was at first divided into the Protectorates, respectively, of the North and of the South and the Colony of Lagos. Each unit had its separate administration and bureaucracy. Later on, the Southern Protectorate was divided into the Eastern and the Western Regions and Northern one too became a Region. And Lagos, finally, became a Federal territory. Successive constitutional reforms had the effect of emphasizing regionalism. A Nigerian thus had little opportunity to feel that he was under a common government which commanded his obedience, allegiance and loyalty,

In 1954, the barest framework of a Federal structure was erected. At the same time, regional autonomy became increasingly emphasized and, by 1957, it was fully in force in the two regions of the South. In the North, regional autonomy was introduced in 1959. In that year also Federal elections took place. Thereafter, the Federal Legislature in January 1960 passed a Resolution with the support of all the political parties demanding Nigerian Independence on 1 October 1960. Nigeria, accordingly, became independent on that date.

The United Kingdom's decision to transfer power was taken at the right hour. Delay would have meant the growth of tensions between the North and South. There were in fact ominous references to partition of Nigeria. Northern fears were allayed by devising a weak federal structure, by giving to it parity of representation with the South, and by ensuring that changes in the regional boundaries would not be effected except by the most cumbrous procedures.

The political parties in Nigeria are essentially regional and largely ethno-centric. The National Convention of Nigerian Citizens

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Extracts from a report prepared by P N Haksar in August 1962, when he was Indian High Commissioner in Nigeria.

(NCNC) is largely an Ibo-dominated party and holds sway in the Eastern Region. The Northern People's Congress (NPC) dominates the North and derives its support largely from Islamic ethnic groups majority of whom are Hausas and Fulanis. The Action Group (AG), until its recent crisis, dominated the Western Region and was overwhelmingly Yoruba in its character, composition and inspiration.

No region is, however, ethnically homogeneous. Each contains minorities. Each political party, consequently, operates in other regions by championing the cause of dissident minorities. Thus the AG receives support through its affiliated party, the United Middle Belt Congress, from the Pagan tribes and Yoruba irredentists in the North as well as from certain minority groups in the Eastern Region. The enmity between AG and NPC is primarily due to this. The NCNC receives support in the Western Region from the minorities in the Mid-West region who are likely to form a state of their own. The NCNC also receives support from a small section of the northern people organized in a political party called the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU). The NPC which was last to arrive on the political scene has remained a party confined exclusively to the North, though it is making some efforts to gain a foothold in the South.

What are the economic and social contents of the programme of the various political parties?

The NCNC is the oldest of the political parties. Founded in 1944, it brought together and gave coherency to nationalist stirrings in Nigeria. In its origin and conception, it was meant to be, and in fact was an organization for giving expression to Nigerian nationalism uninhibited by ethnic, linguistic and regional considerations. The original inspiration, however, was neither sufficiently strong nor deep to withstand the corrosive effects of British Colonial Policy and of tribal loyalties. And so, by 1948, the NCNC became confined to Ibo-land, though its charismatic leader, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, continued to evoke sympathy and support from such individuals in other ethnic groups who had liberated themselves from purely tribal consciousness. Being the oldest party, the NCNC has given greater thought and attention to social and economic problems. It also contains within itself the varying shades of the political spectrum from the left to the right. But its dominant leadership, particularly since its entry into a coalition with the NPC in the Federal Government, stands between left centre to right of the centre. Since it is in power, both in the Region as well as in the Federation, the NCNC has not yet experienced the need for a clearer definition of its political and social aims, and is able to maintain unity within its ranks by distribution of patronage and by talking about "practical socialism".

The Action Group, founded in 1951, owes its origin entirely to the stimulation of Pan-Yoruba sentiments against the encroachment of the NCNC which was stigmatized as a party of the Ibos. Until its recent crisis, it formed the Government of the Western Region and constituted the party in opposition in the Federal Parliament.

The recent crisis in the Action Group and the supersession of the Government of the Western Region by an Emergency Administration was due to a conflict between the Leader of the Party, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, and his Deputy, Chief S L Akintola. The former is the Leader of the Opposition in the Federal Parliament and the latter was the Premier of the Government of Western Region. The conflict is, basically, about policies. Chief Awolowo feels that the Government of the Western Region should be a shining example of democratic socialism so that the Action Group's appeal is not based on purely Yoruba sentiments but on a wider basis of a progressive policy and honest administration. Chief Akintola, on the other hand, feels that Chief Awolowo's policy would make for a permanent conflict with the Federal Government. He, therefore, advocates that the AG should confine itself to the Western Region and co-operate with the Federal Government even to the extent of entering into a coalition with the NCNC and NPC. He has now formed a new party called the United People's Party. One of the aims of the Party is to call for a National Government of Coalition of all the Parties at the Federal level. His support comes largely from the conservative elements in Yoruba society.

As a result of the Emergency, a number of leaders of the Action Group have been subjected to restriction on their movements. Chief Awolowo is one of those who have been restricted.

The Northern People's Congress was founded in 1951 with the avowed object of fighting the threat of Southern domination. Its character and composition are a reflection of a rather complicated situation obtaining in the Northern Region. As the Region is larger, both in territory and population, than the two Southern Regions, it occupies a very special position in Nigerian politics. I have, therefore, dealt with it in a separate note.

Briefly, the North represents a feudal order dominated by the Emirs. There are 37 Emirates. Each Emirate is governed by the Emirs and his Council and an administrative apparatus called the "Native Administration". The British used to govern the North by means of "Indirect Rule", i.e., through the Agency of a Resident appointed in each Emirate. The system was borrowed by Lord Lugard from India where he spent his early years as a subaltern.



If we in India find the problems of national and emotional integration so baffling, one can imagine the difficulties existing in Nigeria. No composite nationalism took roots in the country. There has not evolved an all-Nigerian political party. There are no common cultural traditions, no written language except the Hausa in the North. And that language is lacking in the most elementary form of literature. There is no single spiritual centre of gravity for the whole people. Even though Islam, embracing nearly 50 per cent of the population, is more rooted in the soil of the country than Christianity, it nevertheless orientates the minds of its adherents towards Mecca and even Pakistan. As for Christianity, it has imported its own denominational differences into the country. What is even more serious is that Christianity has uprooted the people from the traditions and culture of their forefathers. The Church itself is dominated by non-Nigerian agencies and is a source of constant mischief.

The fact that Nigerian National Anthem and the State emblem were created by Englishmen reflects far more accurately than anything else the spiritual poverty of Nigeria.

If a Nigerian is spiritually distracted, intellectually he is starved. In 1960, Nigeria did not have a single university. There was only one Degree College at Ibadan which was affiliated to the University of London. It was a heavily endowed show-piece of British ways and British standards totally unrelated to Nigerian requirements. The result of the lack of educational facilities even up to the level of Secondary Schools can be seen everywhere. There are not enough qualified Nigerians to man Civil Services, Armed Forces, Banks, Schools, Colleges, etc. Teachers even for Primary Schools have to be imported.

Since Independence, great efforts are being made to expand Primary and Secondary education. A university has been established at Nsukka in the Eastern Region. Dr Azikiwe is the moving spirit behind it. Another university is being established at Ife in the Western Region. A Federal University is being planned for Lagos and a yet another in the Northern Region.

The economic life of the country is dominated by foreign interests who earn vast profits, uninhibited by income-tax and Company Law administrations which are weak and ineffective. The economy is so consumer-oriented that there is very little of saving. There is no Nigerian industry of any size or significance. Even retail trading is dominated by Europeans, Indians and Lebanese. The Nigerian middle class is still very small and it has yet to acquire bourgeois virtues of thrift and minimum integrity in business dealings.

The infrastructure for Nigeria's economic development is



extraordinarily weak both in terms of qualified manpower and in terms of physical assets — roads, communications, power and transport. Nigeria has, for instance, barely 1,700 miles of metre-gauge railway.

Agriculture is still at the hoe-stage. There are no ploughs and no irrigation even of the most elementary kind.

The only hopeful feature is that Nigeria is richly endowed in resources — both agricultural and mineral. The second important favourable factor is low density of population. With all that, Nigeria has yet to fight for her political and economic freedom. The task is by no means easy. And it is rendered rather more difficult, by the policies pursued by America, Britain and by other West European countries. The basic objective of their policies is to maintain the *status quo*, to help build Nigerian economy only as an adjunct to their respective economies and to divert Nigerian mind from concentrating itself on finding Nigerian solutions to Nigerian problems.

General Jansson, the last Belgian Chief of Force Public in Congo, had made famous his celebrated equations: "After Independence = Before Independence". In terms of this equation, Africa today can be divided into three groups: Those who consciously repudiate this equation and establish a new basis for their economic and political life; those who definitely accept the validity of this equation; and, finally, those who, while not accepting it, find it difficult to upset it. Nigeria falls into this third category.

In Southern Nigeria, our country evokes a sympathetic response among a wide variety of intelligentsia and among politically-influential group of people. We are a country of Gandhi and Nehru and are regarded as pioneers who showed the way to securing national emancipation. During the last war, several thousand Nigerians found themselves in our country at a crucial period of our struggle for freedom. They were all greatly influenced by our sense of dedication and the suffering which our leaders and people alike were prepared to undergo to secure our freedom. On their return to Nigeria, these ex-servicemen added to the political ferment in Nigeria. Thus among politically-conscious Nigerians, the vast majority of whom are the Southerners, we can find a basis for a common approach to our respective problems in the domestic and in international fields.

The situation is different in the North. Until very recent times, that Region had not experienced the sensations, emotions and feelings which together constitute a movement for self-expression and social emancipation. Consequently, the ruling elements in the North view their domestic and international problems within a framework of reference

which is widely different from our own. Terms like "secularism", "democracy", "social justice", "non-alignment", etc., are not really understood by them. These ideas are regarded with extreme reserve. But even in the North, there is rapidly growing up an intelligentsia who are our friends. And in the urban areas, generally, our country is known and is treated in a friendly way. The Sindhi merchants, our doctors serving in the North and our films have contributed a great deal towards creating this atmosphere of friendliness. The ruling elements themselves are not unfriendly. On the contrary, they, too, respect our country. But there is not that emotional and intellectual nexus connecting them with us.

The basis, however, for growth of friendship between our two countries can never be our past contributions. These contributions constitute the favourable soil in which we need to plant fresh seeds. Our country must become relevant to the endeavours of the rising generation of Nigerians. Just as our national struggle made the Nigerians feel that they too could be free, so our present endeavours to refashion our society should encourage them to feel that they too can develop their country. Unfortunately, however, social, economic and cultural developments cannot be comprehended without actually seeing them. We must stimulate in a big way the physical contacts between ourselves and Nigerians. This is of prime importance. We must find resources for this.

Important and influential Nigerians must be enabled to visit our country. We must provide facilities for training of Nigerians in India. The second important contribution we can make towards forging a link between ourselves and Nigerians is by providing assistance in trained manpower. In the whole of Africa, there is an acute shortage of such manpower. For political reasons, Nigerians as well as other Africans do not wish to retain British personnel despite very tempting offers made by Britain. Inevitably, they look towards our country for assistance as we are not only politically acceptable but also because our experts can work on a basis of equality with the Nigerians and stimulate in them a sense of self-confidence.

## KRISHNA - AS I KNEW HIM

In the tortured history of human race, millions upon millions have died. Who they were, we do not know. They are dead.

In the early hours of the morning today, Krishna Menon died. But he lives. His entire life and all that he did is part of the immortal history of the people of India. Our history which covers several thousand years has a quality of indestructible continuity. Krishna Menon is part of that continuity. I had known Krishna Menon for nearly 37 years. I find it difficult to disentangle memories, events and images of him which are crowding in my mind. Let me try and separate some of these.

I can recall in all its detail the day I met him. I recall the year. It was 1937. The month was November. It was lunch time. I was stepping out of the London School of Economics. Next door to it, in the Houghton Street where the School was situated, was a small cafe run by a cheerful Italian. I often went there to have my lunch. As I was turning towards it, I met Feroze Gandhi. He asked me if I was doing anything in particular. I said that I was not, and that I was merely thinking of having a bite in the cafe. He said: "Let us go to the India League just across the road". I had heard about the India League but had never visited it. And so I was curious.

Feroze and I walked into Aldwych, past a group of buildings called the Bush House, into the Strand, up a flight of dark stairs, into a room. There I saw for the first time Krishna Menon.

His face is deeply etched on my mind. His bright burning eyes, sharp nose, flashing teeth, shock of hair, a near ascetic face, severely controlled sensuousness of his lips, would attract any great sculptor working in granite or in bronze, but not in marble. The walls were lined with shelves of books in a state of disarray; the floor was littered with papers, stencils, unwashed cups of tea, overflowing waste-paper baskets. From the room next door one could hear the rhythm of a duplicator.

When I addressed him as Mr Krishna Menon in reply to one of his questions, he interrupted me and said: "I am Krishna. Just Krishna." Thereafter, to me and to all his friends and associates, he was Krishna not Krishnaji or anything else.

As it was lunch time, I had expected that he might be having a sandwich. But there was nothing to eat. He said: "let us have some tea." I looked round if there was any way of making tea. Behind his chair, I saw a little gas ring, and Feroze, who was apparently an expert in making tea,

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put the kettle on. That is how I met Krishna and got introduced to the India League which was the centre of his universe.

Any time was tea time with Krishna. He seemed to thrive on tea. I never saw him taking any regular meals. He lived in poverty and thrived on masses of cups of tea. Once in a while, someone like Miss Agatha Harrison, came along and then, after a great deal of cajoling and coaxing, Krishna would be persuaded to go down to an ABC restaurant where he would nibble at a vegetable cutlet; for, Krishna was a vegetarian.

Years after when he was High Commissioner in London, a distinguished ambassador was discussing in great detail the importance of animal protein and he finally clinched the argument in favour of eating meat by saying: "After all God has created these animals for human beings." Krishna retorted: "But your Excellency, God has also created human beings and we do not approve of cannibalism."

There is a tendency in our country to be so inward looking as to forget altogether the contribution which India League and Krishna made towards the cause of our country's freedom. We say that this struggle for Indian Independence was fought and won by India. Undoubtedly, it was fought and won in India; but Indian Independence was a product of negotiations and not of a revolutionary upheaval. It was a product of negotiations between the British on the one side and Indian nationalism on the other. More specifically, it was a result of negotiations between the British Labour Government and Indian National Congress. Krishna's dedicated work through India League prepared the British labour movement to accept Indian Independence: his work prepared the intellectual opinion in Britain in favour of Indian Independence. He got the trade union movement to get committed to Indian Independence.

During the years in the Indian High Commission in London from 1948 to 1955 and from 1965 to 1967, I used to wander a great deal up and down the country. This took me to some remote areas of Scotland, Wales and England. And everywhere I met people who remembered Mr MeeNon, as he was called. They enquired about him affectionately, told me how well he was remembered, what a fine person he was, and how well he spoke for India. Outside Britain, Krishna was known to all those men and women, writers and intellectuals, who cared for the cause of the progress of humanity.

Out of the period of nine years I spent in our High Commission in London, four years (1948-1952) were of apprenticeship under Krishna Menon.

It was in the month of May 1948 I was emerging out of Girja



Shankar Bajpai's room in the South Block after a long session with him in which he was trying to persuade me to join the foreign service and to accept an assignment in South Africa. In the corridor, I met Krishna. And he informed me that I was to go to London. "I have spoken to Panditji. We shall work there together." Thus it was that I found myself in our High Commission in London.

I said that I spent four years of apprenticeship under Krishna and this might be as good an occasion for me to publicly acknowledge what I owe to him. What little I learnt about the art and science of diplomacy, it was at his feet. From him I learnt the art of negotiation. I learnt from him that in diplomacy the most important thing was courage, a non-negotiable sense of dedication to the interests of one's country and a capacity to see, what your opponent has in mind and to discern whether there was a basis for linking up your opponent's concern with your own.

Krishna was fiercely dedicated to his country's interest and he sought to protect it, advance it, and project with an extraordinary incisive mind — a mind which was most elegantly furnished with deep knowledge of history, of psychology, of philosophy. It was this mind which he dedicated to the cause of our country both prior to Indian Independence and subsequently in the councils of the world where Krishna's name attracted immediate attention and respect. He could not be deflected by flattery or blandishments from pursuing with tenacity the interests of his country.

I am not saying that Krishna was a man without flaw. He had them, but these were nothing when compared to the extraordinary qualities he possessed. Of course, he just could not suffer fools, especially of the more active variety.

I have examined over a period of years the physiognomy of his critics. There were those who could not bear his proximity to Jawaharlal Nehru. Basically, these men and women lacked confidence in themselves and appeared tall because they walked on stilts of office or something else. There were others who turned against him after being beneficiaries of his kindness and patronage; and finally, there were those, mostly foreigners, who called him "abrasive", "anti-West", "Fellow travellers", and "Communist" because he refused to play the diplomatic game according to rules made by others.

I had occasion to see Krishna in recent years without the halo of office, I found him without rancour. He was troubled but serene. His mind remained alive and he could still come with devastating comment on men and events. But he was at peace with himself, and that is what most of us would like to feel whenever our days are numbered.

## AN ESSAY IN MEMORY OF RAJNI PATEL

There are several ways of looking at the "comédie humaine". At times I like to contemplate it as a web of relationships with fellow human beings and with Nature. At the very commencement of life at the time of birth, one becomes a part of complex of relationships. The process of growing up involves one in establishing human relationships by choice. Friendships are thus born. Such friendships constitute my most precious possession in life. And friendship with Rajni Patel is part of that possession. I vividly recall my first meeting with him in London some time in December 1937. And I met him by sheer chance on a Sunday morning.

I was staying with an Irish family at 21 Denning Road in Hampstead. Every Sunday morning, after breakfast, I tended to go out for a walk on Hampstead Heath. On that particular Sunday I set out for the walk. When I reached the end of Denning Road I changed my mind. Instead of turning to the left towards the Heath, I turned right into Pilgrim's Lane. Why I did it I do not know. Inevitably I found myself at the crossing of Pilgrim's Lane and Haverstock Hill, I turned left from there to go towards Belsize Park. The destination I had in mind that morning was Primrose Hill. But when I reached the Belsize Park underground railway station, I changed my mind once again and turned into England's Lane. My destination was changed from Primrose Hill to Regents Park. As I found myself walking along the left side of England's Lane, an idea crossed my mind that I might visit Mohan Kurraramangalam whose acquaintance I had struck a few months earlier, and I knew that he had come down from Cambridge and was staying with one Marion Robey.

I had hardly settled down to have a cup of tea with Mohan when there was a knock at the front door. Marion Robey opened the door and I heard her saying in her usual warm and affectionate tone: "Rajni : Lovely to see you". And soon Rajni was there. Mohan Kurraramangalam introduced me to him. I watched his face. And then turned to watch Mohan face. The architecture of both the faces so strikingly different. But both radiated warmth. Rajni did it by the way he smiled. Mohan's did it by his voice. Both were occupying the centre of the stage in the drama of the Indian students movement in Great Britain. I was then, merely an observer who was getting emotionally involved in that drama. With the passage of time, the chance encounter with Rajni Patel on a Sunday morning grew into friendship. It now forms part of my precious possession.

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Courtesy: Smt Bakul Patel.

Rajni had constantly twinkling eyes and he had an infectious way of laughing and smiling. I gradually discovered that he had some deep passions simmering within him all the time. He was also kind hearted and generous by nature.

By the time World War II broke out, Rajni Patel was deeply and passionately involved not merely in the Indian students movement, but also with the world students and youth movements. The story of this involvement is summed up in a signed article Nehru wrote in the *National Herald* of 29 September 1940 on Rajni's home coming. About a week earlier he had also written about Rajni to Mahatma Gandhi. The text of this letter and his subsequent signed article being the same, I would only reproduce textually Nehru's article in the *National Herald* under the title: *Home-Coming:*

Rajni Patel had been out of India for many years. Now he was returning home and he was filled with excitement at the prospect. Air mail letters and cables came from him to me from his various stopping places and in each of these he gave expression to his joy at coming back. Rajni had gone to England five or six years ago for the Civil Service Examination. His parents had set, their hearts on this. They lived in the heart of Gujarat in the village Sarsa, near Anand, which is a stronghold of the Patel clan. Because of his name, Rajni was sometimes in England taken to be a relative of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. But he was not so connected.

He prepared for the Civil Service and even got thus far as to sit in the examination room. But he was soon informed that he could not appear for the examination as his views and opinions were not approved of by the authorities, presumably the India Office. So he was pushed out of the examination room, a somewhat unusual occurrence.

He took up other studies and ultimately was called to the Bar. Apart from his regular studies, he interested himself in many activities and became a popular figure in various student groups and associations. He was of the type that wins interest and approval easily. Intelligent, agreeable and pleasant, and with an ability above the normal. He was interested in socialism, in the Labour movement, in the youth movement, and of course in Indian affairs. He worked for some time with the India League in London. His very popularity, came in the way to some extent, of effective and continuous work.

At last, in November last, in the early months of the war, he

left England with the intention of returning to India via America. Having been intimately connected with the British Youth Movement, he got into touch with the American Youth Congress and for many months his American friends would not agree to his leaving America. They made him tour extensively in the United States and he had a very favourable reception everywhere. He addressed numerous meetings and conferences organized by the Youth Congress.

At last after nearly nine months' stay in the United States, he took ship for China, where he intended to break journey for two or three weeks. He was the bearer of greetings and various messages from American Youth to Chinese Youth. At Hong Kong, however, the British authorities refused to allow him to stay and he was sent back to his ship. At Singapore he was not even permitted to land, as other passengers were, for a brief while.

On 17 September, he reached Bombay. The time of arrival of ships is not notified and so there was no one to meet him. None, that is, of his friends. But the police apparently had long waited for him and they seized him on the plea of his having objectionable books and papers. But they would have arrested him anyhow as they had long been in wait for him. They did not approve of the speeches he had delivered in America.

I learnt for the first time of his arrest from an evening paper in Bombay. I tried immediately to find out where he was and, if possible, to interview him. The police refused to tell us where he was being kept and, as for an interview, we were informed that none could be granted without the special permission of the Bombay Government. Early next morning, he was sent to Nasik jail.

So, Rajni, whom I had expected for so long, had come at last. His own eager wish to be back home was fulfilled. He was home in India, but what a strange home-coming it was! Or perhaps it was not so strange after all. For in India the way to home for those who are straight and true leads often to the gates of prison.

Human beings are of infinite variety. I have not succeeded in classifying them in neat categories. There is however one way of classifying them. And I do so by dividing them between those who wear masks and those who do not. The vast majority of us, in the process of growing up, acquire masked faces. Only a few succeed in having faces



which are transparent. Jawaharlal Nehru was one of them. His face reflected every feeling and emotion. Some time in 1970 I recall a casual conversation with Rajni about Nehru. I would recall only one sentence uttered by Rajni: "How can I forget him. He gave meaning to my life. How can I forget what he wrote about me in the *National Herald*." This chance articulation by Rajni of his feelings for Nehru must have simmered within him for a long time. It led him and his wife Bakul to identify themselves completely with the cause which Smt. Indira Gandhi had come to symbolize. It was an immense tragedy both for Rajni and Bakul Patel to discover with horror that their good faith and devotion became suspect in the eyes of Sanjay Gandhi. By nature and temperament, Rajni Patel was a whole hogger. Therefore, he assumed all the responsibilities of the Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee including, of course, the responsibility of raising funds for the Party. According to the old saying in Hindi, it is rather difficult for anyone entering a coal cellar to come out of it without a trace of coal dust. Only two persons succeeded in achieving this: Rafi Ahmad Kidwai and Rajni Patel. Neither amassed wealth. To the best of my knowledge and belief, Rajni even left debts which his ever devoted wife, Bakul Patel, settled in response to her own sense of sacredness and duty.

Since love, compassion and altruism no longer inspired our politics, Rajni must have thought of doing something more durable to discharge his debt to Jawaharlal Nehru. This, ultimately, crystallized into an idea. It took the form of creating, in Bombay, the Nehru Centre. It is within my personal knowledge that the entire conceptual design of this Centre was conceived jointly by Rajni and Bakul Patel. The Planetarium, the Discovery of India Hall were all meant to be monuments to the life and work of Nehru. The Centre was to radiate light of Reason, Rationality and of Scientific Temper. It is intensely tragic that Rajni closed his eyes and stopped breathing on 3 May 1982. He could not thus see the completion of his vision and design of Nehru Centre. However, I know how intensely dedicated his wife, Smt Bakul Patel is to Rajni's dream which she shared. It is to be devoutly hoped that those who are in charge of the Nehru Centre will not turn it into a mere mausoleum.

Our ancient society today desperately needs gathering together of all those who seek our country's salvation through reason, rationality and scientific temper. Unless we devote ourselves with intense passion to gaining of knowledge, through the application of spirit of enquiry and understanding and insisting on *pramaan* (proof) of everything and dethrone mere assertion of Authority, we shall pass through dark ages. Rajni must have had a premonition of this sort when he and

Smt Bakul Patel got together a few of us in Coonoor in October 1981 where we spent together four days and four nights in trying to come to grips with the imperatives of scientific temper.

I recall a feeling of intense worthwhileness in my life as we debated and discussed, during those four days the imperatives of scientific temper, its meaning and substance. The result of the efforts made were set out in a "Statement on Scientific Temper" which caused considerable debate and some ill-informed and hostile criticism. However, historical processes have a way of confronting every society with challenges. And our country today faces several challenges. Some of these were anticipated in a serious debate organized at the Nehru Centre at the initiative of Smt. Bakul Patel. It was a debate on scientific temper and spiritual values. Tragically, Rajni was no longer alive. Smt Bakul Patel had gathered together not only a large number of scientists, but also Swami Ranganathananda of Ramakrishna Mission and Shri C Subrahmaniam who was President of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. The debate succeeded in synthesizing the imperatives both of scientific temper and spiritual values.

As I understand it, the quintessence of the message of Indian civilization lies in its message of universalism where each one, while being rooted in himself or herself, seeks to transcend those roots. That is the message of our *saints, sages and sufis* whose voices echo and re-echo through the corridors of time if only we have sensitive ears to hear them. One of the finest expressions of universalism of Indian civilization and of a vision of our country's future is in the following passionate poem of Rabindranath Tagore:

Where the mind is without fear  
and the head is held high,  
Where knowledge is free;  
Where the world has not been broken  
up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;  
Where words come out from the depth of truth;  
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;  
Where the clear stream of reason  
has not lost its way into the  
dreary desert sand of dead habit;  
Where the mind is led forward  
by thee into ever-widening thought and action

into that heaven of freedom,  
My Father;  
let my country awake.

Every word and every line of Tagore's poem quoted above needs to be read, re-read and internalized by each citizen of the Republic of India. Only then we shall succeed in ensuring that in our daily social existence, love, compassion, tolerance, altruism and co-operation triumph over hatred, cruelty, intolerance and selfishness. That would also be an appropriate response to the memory of Rajni Patel.

I recognize that the process of converting Tagore's dream into reality will take a long time. In the meantime, our nascent democracy which is beleaguered and besieged needs to be resuscitated. For, without democracy, there can be no viable alternative political system which would hold our country together. Without democracy, there cannot be any vision of Growth with Social Justice and Stability. In his own way, Rajni Patel was deeply committed to democracy and social justice. In the succeeding paragraphs, I shall argue that in what remains of the twentieth century and the coming century, the democratic process and democratic structures constitute the minimum necessary condition for designing and fashioning India's future.

Throughout my life, I have been haunted by a gnawing question and that question is: wherein lie the roots of human sorrow, suffering and tragedies? I cannot say I have found an answer to the haunting question even after studying in detail the life and work of Prince Siddhartha who came to be known as the Buddha. But as in science, I have made what might be called a first approximation to the truth about these haunting questions. I have come to the conclusion, after witnessing the human drama for a very large part of this century, that probably our tragedies and misfortunes — individual as well as collective — lie in the circumstances that a vast majority of us think, even in the midst of upheavals and accompanying turbulence, as Goethe said, nothing is happening. We cling to our mindsets. We become opaque to anything new, and the novel is treated like an eczema which has to be got rid of. When humanity, either individually or collectively, refuses to face the emerging realities, then tragedies are bound to occur. We Indians desperately need to make a new beginning and we cannot make it unless we cast aside our prejudices, our mindsets and try to ensure that our mind reflects as far as possible the reality of the contemporary human condition.

I shall deal with the human condition today in two interrelated

aspects: the macro reality of the human condition on this earth today and then go to the micro reality of our little world, India, and see what its problems are, expressed in terms of the human spirit and articulation of all its urges and aspirations through democracy.

I begin to see the end of my life's road nearer as well as clearer than its beginning. The road I have traversed accounts for more than three-quarters of this century. I ask myself: Is there anything distinctive about this century, or is it a mere repeat performance of the earlier centuries? I also ask myself: If there have been changes, do we respond to these by shrugging our shoulders and saying to ourselves, as the French proverb goes, that the more it changes, the more it is the same? We could also take refuges behind the cyclical view of human dignity on this earth best expressed in the palpable ennui of the Sanskrit verse:

*Punarapijanaanam, punarapi maranam,  
Punarapi janani jathare shayanam,  
Iha sansare bahu dustare,  
Kripaya pare, pahi. Murare.*

(To be born, to die and to take birth again and again,  
This world, impossible to ford, save me, O Murari)

Is the drama merely of birth and death and being reborn? Also, are we helpless victims of the law of *Karma* and thus must we accept our destiny? Or is there something more in this human drama of wider dimensions involving the assertions of human consciousness and of human spirit? When Karna, in the *Mahabharata*, was twitted about his alleged lowly birth, he responded spiritedly by asking the others to judge him not by referring to his birth, but by his deeds and valour. Implicit in this is the assertion of autonomy which Karna called *paurush* (courage) or *purushartha* (human effort). [...]

[...] No Other century, since the emergence of human beings from their cave dwellings, has witnessed in so short a period of time the great political revolutions of the twentieth century. And if one were to look for individuals who symbolize the dreams and aspirations of human-kind, this century witnessed the emergence of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru in our own country. China witnessed the emergence of Sunyat Sen and Mao Zedong; Indo-China saw the emergence of that very remarkable person — Ho Chi Minn. Then, of course, there was Lenin. There was Kamal Attaturk. Then there was Egypt's Nahas Pasha and later on Abdul Gamal Nasser. On the continent of Africa, there arose men like Kwame Nkrumah and Nnauidi Azikwi, Julius Nyerere and Robert Mugabe. And recently, we have



witnessed the emergence of that remarkable symbol of Africa's sense of dignity and pride, namely, Nelson Mandela. Every country has experienced a stir. People are astir, and they are conscious of struggling for something new.

The events of this century have made one thing absolutely clear — there is no escape from democracy. The founding fathers of our own country had the wisdom to recognize that India could not be contained in any political structure which was not democratic. Indeed one can see that human travails everywhere, specially in countries whose political structures were meant to reflect the revolutionary aspirations of the people, are not only under stress and strain, but are experiencing vast upheavals because of the denial of democracy. There are convulsions across the breadth of the Soviet Union, and it is quite remarkable that from within the womb of Soviet society an agent has emerged a man of vision who perceives the need for change and is trying to the best of his ability to carry out that change. Everywhere it is so. Even in countries where democracy appears to be firmly established — and I do not wish to minimize the American or the French or the British democracies — problems are arising where the ever-expanding horizons of human beings and their aspirations have to be met one way or another. In dealing with human aspirations and their flowering one must take into account that the first step is the establishment and gaining respect for the identity and dignity of each individual human being. Once that respect and recognition is given to one's basic identity, the task for transcending it is made easier. This is important for a country such as ours where glorious diversities exist in art, culture, literature, dance, drama, music, languages and so on. One must not seek to subsume this diversity in some sort of *a priori* notion of mainstream or *ad hoc* Pan-Indian nationalism. Such an effort will be unproductive and might also lead to explosive situations. [...]

Our democracy must survive because without democracy there can be no orderly, stable and united India. We as citizens must remain extremely vigilant and constantly scrutinize the formal structures we have created, namely, the political, economic, social, legal and other such structures. [...]

## PROFESSOR PRASANTA CHANDRA MAHALANOBIS

Professor Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis was born in Calcutta on 29 June 1893. It would be an act of sacrilege for this journal if we fail to remember him in his centenary year.

Professor Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis and his life partner — Smt Rani Mahalanobis — had only one child. To that child they gave everything they possessed — their hearts, their minds and all their earthly possessions. Today, we identify the child as the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI). It was born in Calcutta in the year 1931. In course of time, the Institute grew in size. It has now its campuses in Delhi, Madras, Bangalore and Hyderabad. Considering that building and maintaining institutions does not come easily to us in India, the survival of the Indian Statistical Institute in a state of excellent health is also a tribute to Professor Mahalanobis' gift to our country.

In 1959, Jawaharlal Nehru took a decision to "adopt" ISI. The deed of adoption was an Act of Parliament which he himself piloted. That Act declared ISI to be an Institute of National Importance. In course of piloting the Bill, Jawaharlal Nehru made the following statement in Parliament:

...You cannot have creative impulses dealt with by routine methods. That is why wherever science has grown very considerably... they give the widest latitude to their scientific apparatus to grow.... These institutions do not have to come for sanctions to people who usually have no ghost of an idea of science.... What happens in the governmental apparatus normally is that it is looked at, very competently looked at, but not looked at from the particular scientific or like point of view.

Now we want science to grow, and I think it is quite essential that we should accept this broad approach to this question that scientific work should have a certain latitude. Therefore, we have decided that in this particular matter, this should continue to be an autonomous organization....

Now, it may be that if this type of approach is a successful approach one may even consider enlarging it so that it may cover some of our own *state-owned governmental enterprises*....

Professor Mahalanobis put our country on the world map of statistics, although he began as a physicist and taught that branch of science in Presidency College, Calcutta for more than two decades. The professor also created the National Sample Survey Organization, the Central Statistical Organization of the Government of India, as well as the Department of Statistics. He also made distinctive contributions to the problems of transforming an ancient civilization and society through planning. The journal of statistics, *Sankhya*, which he founded, is the only scientific journal in India with a worldwide reputation.

In our contemporary times we talk a great deal of our culture and our civilization. But all these years we have forgotten that in our pattern of civilization, a teacher, namely, the *Guru*, occupies a position equal to *Param-Brahma*. The palpable divorce between development, education and culture is producing a society in which the elite, barring a few individual exceptions, are being entirely consumed by material appetites generated by "heartless consumerism".

The greatness and relevance of Professor P C Mahalanobis in our times lies precisely in the fact that he gave to his country and to this society what he possessed and was not ever seen to be engaged in "taking". This malaise is a cancerous growth triggered by the thoughtlessness so evident in the manner we interpret such words as "modernization" and "industrialization". The cancerous erosion of the values of our civilization which have enabled us to survive, as the great poet Iqbal put it, the ravages of time, is entirely due to the utterly simplistic notion that modernization of Bharat is nothing more than "westernization". We do not seem to realize that even western civilization is gripped with the deep crisis of a spiritual malaise.

Acquisition of knowledge, *vidya*, wisdom, *gyan*, have been regarded in our civilization as something which is a distinctive attribute of human beings as distinct from animals. And *vidya* has to be combined with the qualities of *tapa*, *daan*, *guna*, *sheel*, and *dharma* if our society is not to be reduced to a mere animal form. Professor Mahalanobis combined all these qualities in himself. In all the arid debates on development, we forget the critical role of education and culture. Professor Mahalanobis' life and work ought to remind us of our failure.

As our country transits from an agrarian civilization to an industrial civilization, we will have to pay a heavy price if our education system fails to sensitize every child to a feeling for quality. Professor Mahalanobis understood this and brought to us the knowledge which is known as Statistical Quality Control and Quality Assurance as well as Reliability, together with knowledge of Operations Research and

Multivariate Analysis. It might be mentioned, in passing, that Professor Mahalanobis' transition from physics to statistics was the result of his own passionate spirit of enquiry into social and natural phenomena which can only be understood through mathematical statistics.

In the debates which are going on in our country, especially in the political arena, contemplating the life and work of Professor Mahalanobis might help in generating a passion for verifiable knowledge rather than assertions made in the name of faith. It took the Catholic Church more than three and half centuries to discover the truth proclaimed by Galileo. His Holiness Pope John Paul cautioned the theologians in the following words:

...the birth of a new way of approaching the study of natural phenomena demands a clarification on the part of all disciplines of knowledge.... It is a duty for theologians to keep themselves regularly informed of scientific advances in order to examine, if such be necessary, whether or not there are reasons for taking them into account in their reflection or for introducing changes in their teaching....

It is to be devoutly hoped that the centenary year of Professor Mahalanobis' birth would generate thought processes in India which would transcend the artificial divides between politics, economics, social sciences and natural sciences without which we shall become, as an English poet put it, "a desert land of vice and shame".

Our own great poet Rabindranath Tagore, who was a close friend of Professor Mahalanobis, also dreamed that in our country the "clear stream of reason" would not get "lost in the dreary desert sand of dead habit".

As one surveys the human condition on this earth at this particular moment in time, one cannot fail to discover, howsoever insensitive one might be, the vast turbulence afflicting entire humanity. Measurements of affluence, gross national products, wealth and indebtedness do not really reveal the deep crisis, both of the human spirit and human identity. And, we who live on this earth and have, as yet, nowhere else to go, are threatened by ecological disasters and that too not in a distant future.

If remembering Professor Mahalanobis is not to degenerate into mere rituals performed with heartlessness, we owe it to ourselves and to his sacred memory to lay aside personal egos as well as the pursuit of "getting and spending", if we are to serve the cause of the survival of our earth and of human beings not merely as one of the species, but human



beings possessing sensitive hearts and minds which one associates with the word "humanism". And not merely monochromatic humanism, but pluralistic humanism.

Sensitiveness to quality as to beauty and love are not quantifiable. But without a passion for these, there will be neither an improvement in the quality of our daily life, nor in the quality in our production system or in the service sector. Professor Mahalanobis was, in our country, a Messiah of "Quality".

This might not be an occasion for us to raise the vital question of, what is now referred to as, "sustainable development". We have to define its parameters. So, even as we discuss in depth the specific problem of ensuring quality through engineering, we must not forget the wider dimensions of human predicament as we stand poised on the eve of the commencement of the third millennium of history. We Indians have to come to grips not merely with the hardware of quality, engineering, production and processes, but also the software of values of our evolving society, caught up in a variety of conflicts and tensions.

Might we conclude by saying that civilization evolved in this vast trans-Indus region, extending to the east of the valley of Brahmaputra and from Kashmir to Kerala, had feeling, passion and devotion to quality. This is testified by not merely the products which our weavers and potters made, but also by such monuments as Ajanta, Ellora, Elephanta, Taj Mahal and, of course, the magnificent sculptures by creative artists who, strangely enough, were so absorbed in their creativity that they never cared even to let us know their names, dates and places of birth. This is a unique feature of the subordination of one's ego to some larger purpose in life.

We are of course aware of the fact that the process of industrialization as has taken place in history creates a severe problem of the alienation of human beings from the production process. As the saying goes, he or she becomes a mere cog in the wheel. But it is possible to overcome the alienation if the management, production engineers and, of course, the entrepreneurs inform their knowledge and expertise not only with a feeling for quality, but also make the production culture co-operative and not individualistic. It is our impression that this has been successfully achieved in Japan.

There is one final point which we should like to make and it is addressed to our countrymen who are engaged in the production processes. It would be an absurdity on their part to think that one can divide the production process into two halves, one of which alone produces something for "export quality" and the rest is dumped on the

Indian market. It is also an economically wasteful practice. The imperative of quality cannot be ensured by appointing quality inspectors any more than the efficiency of a boiler can be maintained out of fear of the factory inspector. The fact that our scientists and engineers, working in the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and elsewhere too, have shown that it is possible to sensitize everyone to the imperatives of "quality assurance", encourages one to presume that the task in India is not *ab initio* hopeless. However, as the saying goes, one swallow does not make a summer, the "will and passion for quality" has to permeate our educational system, our value system, our public life and be projected through every institution involved in the process of communication, whether that communication is oral, written or electronic.

Writing these notes on remembering Professor Mahalanobis, some lines from a poem written in 1904 by William Watson come to our mind:

Vain is your Science,  
Vain your Arts,  
Your triumphs and glories vain,  
To feed the hunger of the heart,  
And the famine of the brain.

. . . .

Arise and conquer  
While ye can  
The foe that in your midst resides...

The world leaders would do well to stop searching for a future enemy. That enemy or foe resides within each society, and that enemy in the world of today and tomorrow is the dehumanized and alienated human being deprived of any vision in which there is love, there is compassion and there is justice.

## JYOTI BASU

In trying to excavate the layers of my memory, I came across a picture. It dated back to the year 1938. The date I cannot recall. But the time was evening and the place was Bengal-India Restaurant, Percy St., off Tottenham Court Road, London. It was one of the places where Indian students met and discussed things. The overwhelming majority of Indian students in Great Britain, Northern Ireland and Europe were active members and supporters of the Indian Students Federation. The meeting in Percy St. was called by it. There was great deal of discussion centering around the war which we all sensed was coming; as also facism and the attitude of Indian students who, regarded themselves as part and parcel of our national movement for freedom. There was a point of view expressed with a great deal of vehemence that since our priority concern was the freedom of our country, it was not necessary to get entangled with anti-facism. This evoked a tortured debate. At some stage, someone from the audience stood up to speak. He was calm. He did not raise his voice and he argued gently and persuasively. His name was Jyoti Basu. That is how I saw him and met him for the first time.

World War came. We returned home and we were dispersed in various nooks and corners of our country. I had no occasion to meet Jyoti Basu. At any rate, I have no recollection of any meeting until 1967. Between 1967 and 1987, I have had several occasions to see Jyoti, both as a friend and as a Chief Minister of our Bengal.

I may be wrong, but it is my view that Indian diversities give to reconcilers and to those who possess the healing touch an honoured place in its history. Ashoka and Akbar, Tagore, Gandhi and Nehru were great reconcilers. I rather suspect that Jyoti Basu's rise to eminence in the public life of our country is in some way related immensely to his capacity as a reconciler. And this view of mine links itself up with my memory of our first meeting in Bengal-India Restaurant and I can still hear his gentle voice of persuasion, rather than of a strident denunciation even if such denunciations were sanctioned by scriptural interpretation of *Marxist sutras*. This castes a heavy burden on all those who wish to create a vision of a humane society, woven out of the warp and woof of those generated by the life and work of Marx, Engels and Lenin.

New Delhi  
23-9-1987

PNHaksar

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Originally written for the Bengali Daily *Aaj Kaal*

## SOME CRITICAL ISSUES POSED

*(We are publishing the answer given by Shri P N Haksar in response to the questions put to him by Shri S Viswam, special correspondent, Deccan Herald.)*

**Q. 1** Has the concept of a United India been seriously eroded today? Would you say that recent developments in various parts of the country, specially the northeast and Punjab have ushered in a process of national disequilibrium which may lead to disintegration?

**Ans:** I do not want to be pedantic. But the vision of "united India" is not a "concept", i.e., a general notion or an original idea. It represents the aspiration of the Indian people consistently articulated through our struggle for freedom against British Imperialists.

Throughout our history, the peoples inhabiting India, even when rooted in caste, creed and specific territory, recognized the territory of India as their own. And in the past, large bits of these territories were brought under the domain of Kingdoms and Empires.

What the British rule set in motion was a new aspiration of a united India under a state system which was not associated with either a dynasty or an internal imperial domain, e.g., the Ashokan Empire or the Mughal Empire or the Vijayanagar Empire. The relationship between the people living in the territory of India and the new state was to be a relationship of a citizen to a modern state. And to me emergence of such a citizen was to be a product of growth of secular nationalism in India transcending our primordial divisions based on caste, religion, language and sub-territories of India. And by "sub-territories" of India, I mean the historical territorial domains within India where Bengalis, Tamils, Malayalees, Kashmiris, Maharashtrians, Punjabis, etc. lived.

The formation of a modern nation-state comprising the territory of India and the peoples of India was and remains a great historical challenge. It is historical because during the millinea of our history, we did not create a modern nation-state. Indeed, modern nation-states are a recent phenomenon in the world history. Germany as a modern nation state came into being only in 1871. Great Britain, uniting the Scots, the Welsh and the English dates back to the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The modern Italy emerged in late nineteenth century. Japan became a modern-state only after 1868. And the emergence of the

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Text of an interview with Shri S Viswam, Special Correspondent, *Deccan Herald*.  
*Man & Development*: June 2004.



modern nation state is indissolubly linked up with the emergence of industrial society which created the factors for unification, namely, a common market, modern transport, communication, secularization of educational system, separation of the Church or religion from the State, the habit of working together in industry in contrast to the individualism of a peasant, the break up of the rigid hierarchies of the feudal order, etc. In India we never recognized that we had to cope with severe distortions produced by the British Colonial system.

Creating a united India was also conceptually linked with the industrialization of India, with a widespread application of modern science and technology and the breaking down of our ancient social system embodied in thousands of our *jatis*. All the diversities of India were to be contained within a federal system. It was hoped that the system would be operated politically with sensitiveness to the need, both of diversity and of unity. All these processes of creating a new India were predicated upon the assumption that our planned economy would deliberately work towards increasing equality and, consciously, plan to diminish the concentration of wealth and power in a few hands.

If what I have said is true, then, obviously, the entire process of historical transformation of an ancient society, tortured by 200 years of colonialism, could not be accomplished in a short space of time. The corresponding transformation in other parts of the world took place over long periods of time and were accompanied by turbulence and violence.

If we look back to the period between 1947-84, one can say with honesty that India is still being held together within its federal, republican and democratic framework. We did overcome the most cruel aftermath of partition; our political processes are still capable of expressing in a democratic manner the urges of our people and that our state system has not actually broken down. We have made significant changes in the structure of our economy, the role of science and technology is explicitly accepted and we have avoided violent upheavals on a national scale. This is in contrast to the experience of Latin American, African, Arab and Asian countries.

However, one must, with equal frankness and regard for truth, express the most serious concern about the increasing incapacity of our organized political parties to understand the cardinal importance of the need for a passionate and unrelenting fight for making our state truly secular to the same extent as the State in the united States of America is secular. The increasing insidious attempts to inject political processes by the virus of false religion is full of dangers to our aspiration for a united, democratic, secular India. Our educational system has failed as the

principal means for creating new values appropriate for modern India. And though we have done a great deal to promote the growth of science and technology, there is a total failure of understanding of the socio-cultural and political environment appropriate for the growth of science and technology. Our economy too, despite our pretensions at planning, had developed in a manner to increase the tensions, both in our rural sector and in our urban sector. Our media, be it government owned or privately owned, have shown little understanding of the imperatives of India's modernization.

Wide disparities, which hit you in the eye, between the "haves" and the "have not" add to our social, economic and political tensions. The continuing regional and intra-regional disparities in growth are creating acute tensions. The way our federal system is operated politically lacks sensitiveness to our diversities and to the unevenness in the development of *the needs and requirements* of different states in India. The result is that those who have gained economic and political power in the last 37 years find it easier to incite one set of people against another, one region against another, one religion against another as the sole means for promoting their struggle for power and pelf. Punjab is almost a classical example of such politics.

Unless all of us sit up and seriously think about the inner dynamics of our social, political, economic, cultural and historical processes, we may not succeed in maintaining the integrity of our vision of a united India. It is not as if India would break apart. What is more likely is that we shall lose our inner coherence. We shall become flabby. We shall tend to pull in different directions. And if this were to happen, as it is tending to happen, then India, instead of emerging as a great nation would diminish in its stature and influence in the world of tomorrow and would become, internally besieged and, therefore, an object of history rather than its subject.

**Q. 2** How do you view the resurgence of regional identities? Is it part of the process in which a newly independent country reconciles its socio-economic tensions and achieve cohesion? Or does it indicate the need for fundamental constitutional changes to keep pace with the evolution of a society in transition?

**Ans:** Frankly, I do not understand what is meant by "resurgence of regional identities". Our federal system is predicated upon the assumption of our diversity. The challenge before our political leadership is to take these diversities into account and weave them into a pattern of national unity. In my view, regional identity is to be accepted as a fact of our history and these regional identities will persist for a very very long

time. The Tamils, the Telegus, the Malayalees, the Kashmiris, the Gujaratis, the Bengalis, the Assamese, the Nagas, the Mizos and the Punjabis would be there for thousands of years. This should not cause us any despair. Human beings are not disembodied people. However, the art and science of creating a new India is to take these regional identities as the raw material out of which is to be woven the fabric of a united India. This is the great challenge. If regional identity becomes obsessively inward oriented to the point of saying that India does not matter and that each unit can solve its social, economic, cultural, scientific and technological problems, within the narrow frame of its own territory, then it should cause serious concern. However, it is my assessment that outside the rhetoric of politics, no region of India has reached that stage of looking inwards to the exclusion of other parts of India. That is why movements which tend to have overtones of what is called secessionism, had ultimately to grow out of it. However, it does not mean that we should rely upon reason and rationality to prevail without any effort on our part. There have been movements in history both in our country, e.g. at the time of partition, and in other parts of the world when unreason and irrationality triumphed and brought in its wake vast destruction, sorrow and suffering. The Khalistan movement in its ideology, which one has been hearing about for some time and which has taken some roots in the hearts and minds of our fellow citizens of Sikh faith, needs to be understood and vigorously combatted and this can only be done politically and not by application of force alone. But it is an ideology which needs to be taken seriously because it has received in the past and continues to receive today support from places as distant as Vancouver in Canada, London, the Westcoast of America and so on. It is an irrational ideology, but one must not imagine that it will automatically come to an end.

In my view, the broad structure of our present Constitution is more than adequate, given the right political will to reconcile our tensions and to synthesise our diversities. Parliamentary democracy is a better mechanism for reaching consensus which is so very necessary for India than a Presidential system. One must also remember that political legitimacy must not be viewed merely in constitutional terms but as a function of appropriate policies and the actual response of the people to those policies. We are, after all, living in the closing years of the twentieth century where human aspirations, human consciousness, human knowledge have vastly increased. Our politics must harmonize the aspirations promoted by the political processes and by the enormous expansion and reach of the modern media of communication. Politics conceived in any other terms is guaranteed to destroy the country.



**Q. 3** Has our administrative culture and style of governmental functioning tended to alienate sections of people and regions in the country?

**Ans:** Our entire administrative structure and its culture was inherited from the British colonial state in India. And though various attempts have been made to think of alternative structures, nothing worthwhile has emerged. Even the notorious Administrative Reforms Commission which sat for several years, produced no single idea of reform. The administrative structure is, functionally speaking, designed not as an instrument for bringing about changes, but as an instrument for maintenance of a system. And the British maintained the system with admirable regard for the integrity of the system. It was never allowed to be politically eroded. Whatever merits the administrative structure, we inherited from the British possessed, has been, over a period of years, heavily eroded by the most arbitrary and ruthless politicization. And since politics is concerned with the narrow pursuit of the interest of an MLA or an MP or a Minister, predictably, the administrative structure would collapse as a system, as we shall have division among the civil servants who are “loyal” and those who still wish to work within a set of rules and regulations. In my view, no political party in India has a blueprint of a new administrative structure. Until such time that such a blueprint emerges, wisdom lies in optimizing the effectiveness of the system we have and that system can be made to serve the processes of change which we desire, provided the policies are well-defined and do not arbitrarily vary between one decision and another.

During my long years of experience of dealing with bureaucracy, both at the centre and at state levels, I have come to the conclusion that our politicians as a class just do not understand that the state system as well as the bureaucratic system cannot be run unless one applies strict standards of objectivity and due regard for such rules and regulations which government might make in running the state and bureaucracy. The effects of the failure to do so is clear everywhere: it is visible in Punjab today and has been made pretty naked by the acuteness of the crisis there. It is, however, within my knowledge that the administrative apparatus in all the states of India have been seriously corroded, undermined and demoralized by our politicians' failure to grasp the concept called a system as distinct from a concept called an individual. Unless selection, appointments, postings, transfers, promotions of civil servants are ruthlessly objective and not criminally politicized and corrupted as at present, we will be witnessing the collapse of the administrative apparatus.



**Q. 4** Do you think there is a tendency on government's part to treat agitations stemming from genuine popular aspirations as merely law and order problems? If yes, what should be the correct approach?

**Ans:** Regretfully, this is all too true. To treat deep social, political and economic discontent as merely law and order problem arises from the circumstance that we just do not have the political instrumentality for intervention. Consequently, all problems are sought to be resolved through state intervention and administrative apparatus. And in extreme cases, even armed forces are getting increasingly involved. I feel deeply concerned at the increasing use of force and that too of armed forces as a solvent for serious problems. One indicator of the failure of our political instrumentalities is the way people are driven to resort to seek the intervention of judiciary in matters which ought to be really settled as part of the governance of the country at the political and executive level.

The correct approach should be implicit from the answer I have given to the question. And it consists of dealing with social, economic and other problems by correct diagnosis and evolving appropriate policies and by ensuring strict implementation.

**Q. 5** Have we made any real effort towards promoting a sense of nationhood? What can and should be done in this respect?

**Ans:** In my view, whatever efforts we have made in promoting "nationhood" have been pitiful and inadequate. You cannot promote nationhood merely on exhortation. The sense of nationhood is a mathematical function of a sense of common purpose, common participation, common enjoyment of fruits of freedom, democracy, economic development and culture. Our educational system has a critical role to play in this which it has signally failed to do.

**Q. 6** Would you agree with the view that there has been inadequate public and political mobilization against the assaults on our secularism through the last three decades? Is this a failure of political leadership? Or is it the assertion of communalism aided by political vested interests?

**Ans:** I have in a sense answered this question in reply to the question No. 1. In my view, we have not even begun to understand what is the meaning of the process of secularization and the process involved in creating secular nationalism in an ancient society like ours. I should like to denounce with all the passion at my command, the utter flabbiness of our thinking on the subject of secularization in our country. Secularization is a long drawn-out historical process operating in every country and throughout history of humankind. It has nothing to do with the doctrine of religious tolerance. And even that doctrine of religious

tolerance, for which Mahatma Gandhi gave his life, is no longer practised. Today, we have more intolerance and not less. Today we have serious penetration of pseudo-religion into politics. Our political processes consciously feed the divisiveness created by caste, religion and region. Unless this process is consciously halted, we shall have ugly manifestations of what is called "communalism". And it is the communalism of the majority which needs watching no less critically than the communalism of the minorities.

**Q. 7** Is our present legal system adequate to tackle the guilty who promote communalism and casteism? If not, what is the remedy? In this context, would you also say that our judiciary is sensitive to social change?

**Ans:** I am afraid, neither our political system, nor, indeed, our legal system can cope with the phenomenon of communalism and casteism. The remedy lies in generating, on a massive scale, movement of social reform and this movement can be reinforced and must be reinforced by a common civil code applicable to all citizens of India. We should deliberately make it an offence to promote politics in religious terms. Only in the measure we do these things, would we be able to educate our judiciary to be more sensitive to the problems of social change. At the moment, this sensitiveness is only very exceptional.

**Q. 8** Do you agree with the theory that it is the economic pressure that is contributing to the rise in social and communal tensions in the society?

**Ans:** Economic disparities, coupled with most vulgar display of wealth and the new lifestyles of the rich in India create tensions in our society. Our popular films too contribute to these tensions. The populist politics adds another dimension. The tragedy is that no one who thinks about these matters and knows about these things does anything about the ways and means of defusing tensions.

**Q. 9** What is the nature and thrust of the national consensus that should evolve in order to promote and sustain national integration? How is this to be brought about?

**Ans:** So far as I am concerned, my mind is quite clear. There has to be a national consensus that we shall not tolerate, under any circumstance, the use of religion for political purpose. There has to be national consensus that economic crimes must be punished severely and in the case of smugglers and those who possess and consume smuggled goods, the penalty should be even more severe. There has to be a national consensus on methods of resource mobilization in our country for our development purposes. There must be a consensus on

what constitutes self-reliance and we must work out the scientific and technological criteria of such "self-reliance". There has to be a consensus that so far as growth of science in our country is concerned, excellence must be the flag under which it should be promoted. And this excellence must not consist of verbal exhortations, but supported by creating the necessary conditions in which a scientist is left free to work. There must be a consensus that every plan should equally articulate mission-oriented and well-defined projects which our scientific and technological establishments will be required to pursue in well-defined timeframe. Above all, there has to be a consensus that all politicians, bureaucrats and other functionaries of government must be made strictly accountable and accountability must rest not on some whimsicality but clearly on objective criteria. One could perhaps go on adding to the list. But consensus has to be urgently sought on financing of political processes. Such financing must be open subject to scrutiny and must come out from the darkness in which it operates, corrupting the political process and what is worse, corrupting the entire superstructure of our state system and administrative structure. We must equally have a national consensus against defection.

I have not touched upon one of the most serious problems, namely, that of widespread and all too pervasive corruption. It is my firm belief that one cannot even begin to cope with this problem unless we first of all deal with the distortion and corruption of the electoral as well as political processes.

## REFLECTIONS ON OUR TIMES

A great deal of debate goes on in our country centering around the question of economic growth. According to Simon Kuznets who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Economics in 1971, “a country’s economic growth may be defined as a long-term rise in capacity to supply increasingly diverse economic goods to its population.” Kuznets goes on to say that “this growing capacity (is) based on advancing technology and the *institutional and ideological adjustments that it demands*” (emphasis added). While there is a great deal of debate and discussion on economic growth in our country there is none about ideology and institutions. At the time of the finalization of the Fifth Five Year Plan, there was heated discussion on the percentage growth rate; whether one should aim at a growth rate of five or 4.5 per cent. One distinguished economist even resigned his membership of the Planning Commission as he found the figure of five per cent unacceptable. If we are to go by Simon Kuznets’ view, we should be debating with equal vehemence the problems of technology as well as of “institutional and ideological adjustments”. In a lecture he delivered in Stockholm in December 1971, when he received the Nobel Prize, Kuznets talked about the inter-relationship between economic growth, technology, ideology and institutions. He said:

If technology is to be employed efficiently and widely, and, indeed, if its own progress is to be stimulated by such use, institutional and ideological adjustments must be made to effect the proper use of innovations generated by the advancing stock of human knowledge. To cite examples from modern economic growth: steam and electric power and the large-scale plants needed to exploit them are not compatible with family enterprise, illiteracy, or slavery — all of which prevailed in earlier times over much of even the developed world, and had to be replaced by more appropriate institutions and social views. Nor is modern technology compatible with the rural mode of life; the large and extended family pattern, and veneration of undisturbed nature.

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The source of technological progress, the particular production sectors that it affected most, and the pace at which it and economic growth advanced, differed over centuries and among regions of the world; and so did the institutional and ideological adjustments in their interplay with the technological changes introduced into and diffused through the growing economies.

While in sheer quantitative terms we can certainly take pride in our achievements during the last 35 years, the nature of dissatisfaction which our successes have generated are of such magnitude as to make our achievements mock at us. And now we have reached the stage of universal dissatisfaction. Why? Because we have not paid any serious attention to working out the relationships between technology, ideology and institutions. In fact one hears quite frequently that there is something sinful about talking of "ideology" and questioning the inadequacy of the institutions necessary for sustaining economic growth. It is, indeed, fashionable to appear "pragmatic." What precisely this word means nobody really knows. No one has cared to define. And I rather suspect that pragmatism in our country is a substitute for thought and knowledge. If there is any sacred cow which we should fanatically worship we should call it knowledge. If there is any spirit we should have faith in it should be in the spirit of enquiry and incessant questioning.

Ours is a large country. Within it, we have lived for several millennia, evolving distinctive social institutions, cultural patterns, philosophical systems and ways of creating material wealth. And there is a strong sense of continuity in our existence. Our past is not dead as it is with the civilization evolved, for example, in Egypt, Rome and Greece. Our past lives with us. Our social institutions have survived the vicissitudes of time. And today we number nearly 700 million people. The very process of struggle for freedom which increasingly involved wider and wider strata of our society, generated consciousness about the need for a new identity for ourselves which is distinct from the way we shaped our identity in the past. The new identity was called nationalism. It was quite distinct from the identity based on *jati*. *Jati* has been the molecular unit of our society. Neither Islam nor Christianity could dissolve it. They only added to it. The divisiveness of *jati* was sought to be overwhelmed by the unifying influence of the newly generated process of secular nationalism.

We of course always had a territorial identity. But within this territory we lived as *jatis* and not as a nation. Nationalism expressed as Swaraj or Swadesh was the product of the impact upon us of British

imperialism. So was the concept of State as an abstraction freed from dynasty. The national consciousness was further fed by hopes and aspirations aroused among us by the very process of struggle for freedom.

We said to ourselves that if only we could be free, we could be better fed and better clothed. We would find employment. We would become creative.

We had visions of new India. We became aware of our backwardness in modern industry, in the applications of science and technology, in our failure to apply the fruits of modern knowledge to the fashioning of our national existence. The ideology of nationalism, which was generated by a very large number of our intellectuals, carried us through to the end of our struggle for freedom. We then set ourselves a vision of India. That vision was enshrined in our Directive Principles of our Constitution as well as in the substantive articles of our Constitution. Things went well with us up to this point. But very soon we forgot that it was one thing to have a design but it was quite another to forget that a design is not an edifice. We took the declaration of intent contained in our Constitution to be an act of achievement of that intent.

To move a large mass of people strongly tethered to the entire structure of an ancient civilization, one needs to generate, qualitatively as well as quantitatively, a large mass of energy. The generation of this energy for moving the mass of an internal social system is the essence and substance of political process. And to give shape to this political process and to sustain it, one requires political instrumentality consisting of conscious agents of change.

All these years we have, it seems to me, conceived of "change" too narrowly. We have conceived it purely in terms of growth of economy. And the growth of economy, in its turn, was conceived as a simple function of investment. Even the question of resource mobilization was regarded too narrowly, it excluded the human and natural resources; the result was an exclusive concentration on resources expressed in financial terms. While it was recognized that science and technology would play an important, even a crucial role, in bringing about the transformation of India, the relationship between science and technology on the one hand, and the entire superstructure of ideas and institutions was overlooked. Even a concept like "secularism" was never discussed and debated. It was naively assumed that by merely declaring our State to be secular we had done everything that needed to be done to promote secularism. It also seems to me that all these years we have not frankly admitted to ourselves that democracy, based as it is on the

concept of fundamental rights of human beings and the emergence of an individual to whom a voting right is given, cannot operate as a means of energizing our people if the individual remains enmeshed within the constricting limits of this *jati*. And if politics operates on the individual through *the jati* consciousness, it can only help in perpetuating and giving strength to the *jati* system as against the concept of a nation consisting of free individual citizens.

Each one of the elements to which I have referred could form the subject matter of debate and discussion in our country. However, within the limits imposed, I can only briefly, and perhaps, obliquely illustrate the points I am endeavouring to make.

First of all, about the political instrumentality for bringing about a change. It was readily assumed that the Indian National Congress which had struck deep roots in Indian consciousness, would be the instrument. It was not such a wild assumption to make. However, what we failed to realize is that a political party engaged in securing power had inherent difficulties in being, at the same time, an instrument of change unless a very conscious and determined effort is made for it to remain both an instrument of power and an instrument of change. If the Congress had reflected on what is involved in its remaining an instrument for change, it would have evolved an appropriate framework of ideas or ideology to articulate the change. It would have meant constant renewal of the ranks of the party by men and women who would fight *jatiyata* instead of cashing on it, who would fight for increasing secularization of the Indian mind instead of its remaining constricted within the fossilized thought structure of the past; it would have meant a very conscious restructuring of our entire educational system instead of merely enlarging the Macaulay system in size and volume and yet carrying within it the value system of our colonial past. There is no record of any debate within the Congress of the social, cultural, philosophical, ideological imperatives of making India conform, as approximately as possible, to the vision enshrined in the Directive Principles of our Constitution. On the contrary, it seems to have been assumed that giving a measure of industrialization, this by itself would catalyze the appropriate changes in other departments of our life.

If there has been a failure on our part to understand the imperatives of changes in the realm of ideas and ideologies, there has been an equal failure in evolving appropriate institutions through which millions of our human beings could mobilize themselves for effecting social, cultural and economic transformation. Even the institutions which we inherited from the past have fallen into disuse. We have no civic



bodies which function. We have no effectively functioning voluntary organizations. The Community Development programme came to a grinding halt. The Panchayati Raj system has either not taken roots or where it has, it only embodies the will to power rather than a will to change.

The transformation of a pre-industrial society to an industrial society is a profoundly complex process. This process is something more than the act of setting up even thousands of factories. Industrial and manufacturing enterprises working within the cultural pattern of a pre-industrial society can never produce the process of industrialization although it may produce industrial goods. The process of industrialization involves an extraordinary complex relationship of man, machine and material as well as the ideas and value system of these human beings. A machine, for instance, cannot distinguish between the hand of a Scheduled Caste and that of a Brahmin. A village community in India makes the distinction. A machine requires a different concept of time than what obtains in peasant societies. One needs an ethic of a different kind from the work ethic of a peasant society. A different kind of mental furnishing is required which would perceive causal relationships. Without this perception of cause and effect, the confidence in human labour, knowledge and human intelligence will not come about. Industrialization of older societies in England, France, Germany and Japan brought about profound changes. And these changes were consciously sought and consciously fought for.

Without appearing to be wise after the event, I have always been assailed by doubts about the adequacy of the conceptual framework within which we sought to consummate India's economic transformation. Mixed economy which has always been a euphemism for welfare capitalism seemed to me to be based on an assumption that the ruling elite in India would possess themselves with certain virtues over a long period of time. Despite the reassuring presence of men like Jawaharlal Nehru and some of the stalwarts of our national movement, these virtues were the first casualty. And it began happening within the first decade of independence. I should perhaps explain what I mean by "virtues". The first essential virtue was the need for constant awareness that political power must remain subordinate to the purpose of rendering service; that it should not become a means of livelihood for politicians and their kith and kin. Another virtue which needed to be cultivated was the maintenance of the integrity of decision making processes even where the rich had to be cultivated for greasing political processes; finally, we needed to uphold the virtue of frugality and unostentation in public and private life.



We began with a subsistence economy with a very weak industrial structure. We had a large population and vastly heightened consciousness of rights and expectations stimulated by the very process of the struggle for independence. Japan, as I have shown earlier, grew under a community of authority. Democratic rights and liberties in England, France and Germany followed the growth of wealth. And capitalism in Europe and Japan grew as part and parcel of imperialism. Finally, the idea of a welfare state came to western Europe only at the end of the Second World War. In our country, we had a reversal of the historical parameters within which capitalism grew and matured in Western Europe and Japan.

We began with the assertion of democratic rights and liberties and with heightened expectations of a welfare state without the wealth to sustain the rights asserted and expectations aroused. We have a large population with consciousness of their rights and liberties but with an economy possessing low productive and saving capacity. We have a social structure and a value system which inhibits the flowering of individual personality; our social structure is thus inconsistent with the release of energies of individuals. And we have an educational system which quite effectively inhibits the spirit of free enquiry so very necessary for India's renewal. Is it then surprising that our economic planning within the framework of mixed economy has been staggering from one crisis to another?

It has also never been clear to me if independent self-reliant capitalism could grow in India in the specific context of contemporary world economy increasingly dominated by transnational corporations. The models on display, e.g., Brazil, Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore are hardly inspiring or even relevant unless we become so debased as to settle for making money as junior partners.

Industrialization is certainly a wealth producing process but it is a process qualitatively different from trading and shop keeping. The culture appropriate for money making and money changing is destructive of the process of industrialization of our society. The same kind as a *taluqdar* collecting rent, but it is quite another to become a modern capitalist farmer.

We have reached a situation after three decades of our experience when we need to sit up and think seriously about the next stage of our development. If one looks squarely into the facts and does not allow one's heart and head to be swayed by the beguiling populist slogans and the banners and flags proclaiming socialism or even liberty and equality, one cannot escape the conclusion that during the last 35

years we have grown a grotesque kind of capitalism within the womb of an ancient pre-industrial society. I do not bemoan the growth of capitalism in India. What I bemoan is that the individuals and groups who have benefited by it do not seem to understand the logic of its further growth consistent with the vast internal market, our resource endowment and the formation of our skills. Let us have a quick look at our resources.

Our agro-climatic conditions taken together with the availability of cultivable land provide us with an assurance of production of a wide variety of cash and food crops. Given proper management of land and extension of irrigation there are not many countries in the world where land can yield two to three crops in a year. If we could only manage our coal reserves scientifically and with a rational energy policy, we would have no problems about meeting our energy requirements by means of an appropriate mix of thermal, hydel and atomic energies. The mineral resources in our country, even though inadequately surveyed, are reassuring. And we certainly have enough resources which are lying around and wasted in our fields, cities and forests which if collected and utilized could provide us with new materials as well as energy. We have not even begun to address ourselves to the potentialities of bio-industries in our country. We are equally neglectful of the potentialities of producing, in a decentralized manner, electrical energy from the sun.

As for human resources, we have created a very large reservoir of skills of all kinds. We have a large number of human beings trained as scientists, technologists, management specialists, designers of plants and machinery, specialists in statistical quality control methods, operation researchers, specialists in guaranteeing reliability in complex industrial operations, systems analysts, etc. We have an industrial structure which, if purposefully supported by intensive research and R&D effort can make us truly self-reliant. Even after taking into account the tragedy of brain drain, all these accumulating talents could be woven into a model of development which would optimize our resources of manpower, natural endowments and industrial structures. In order to do so, one would need a political will and a political instrumentality possessed of moral purpose which alone can give confidence and courage to an entire nation to face the problems with which we are confronted and which would require sacrifice rather than immediate fulfilment.

The way the world is moving in our time, it would be hazardous for a country of the size and resources of India to prefer softer options; each exercise of such option, be it in the name of solving our balance of payment problem or because of our inability to mobilize our internal

resources, will make us hostages to the world economy in which each affluent country, driven by the logic of its own internal compulsions, would tend to solve its problems at the expense of the weaker nations.

Increasingly then, the question arises as to why we are in a state in which we find ourselves with all the assets that we possess? Why those who talk about removing the impediments to the growth of capitalism in India pay so little attention to the real impediments to such growth? Even those who wish to have a more radical transformation of our society do not seem to understand that such a transformation can only come out of the dynamics of the specific situation obtaining in India rather than by imposing upon it some half-understood and half-digested elements of ideology of radical transformation.

As I examine closely the specific situation obtaining in our country, the key problems which arise if we are to create an industrial society in India, even within the capitalist framework, are: Firstly, the cleaning up of the grotesquely distorted agrarian relations in our country. Without land reforms we cannot have self-reliant and independent capitalism in India; nor, indeed, can one hope to generate the forces which might create conditions for socialism in India. Secondly, the imperative of the idea of equality in specific Indian conditions have not been worked out. On the contrary, the day-to-day politics, even while paying homage to equality, reinforces terribly antiquated social structures of our ancient society. Without a frontal assault on these social structures carried out and sustained with a consistency of purpose, we cannot release the social energy quartered and contained within the cellular structure of our caste system.

Thirdly, the imperatives indicated by the process of secularization of the Indian mind, need to be pursued with unrelenting zeal. Without such zeal we will not create appropriate ideology for change; and finally, during the last 35 years we have failed to create institutions through which human beings in our villages, semi-urban areas, towns and cities could be harnessed in a purposeful manner for change, even when change is conceived within the framework of capitalism. All these require critical analysis. Such analysis must not be in categories derived from experiences in other countries but rooted in our own experience, reinforced by our own data. Our incapacity to think though constitutes a bigger national failure than the faltering growth rates, the incapacity of our savings to convert themselves into investments, low yields from the investments already made and the alarming growth of the area of irrationality in our society and the consequent retreat from reason when faced with such irrationality. All our



political processes, including those generated by the left in India, promote, objectively speaking, irrationality.

The problems of economic growth in our country are thus conceived far too narrowly. That is why our performance inevitably falls short of our expectations and even of our investments. What we urgently require is a vision of India, not chauvinistically conceived in terms of its glorious past, but of a vision woven out of an acute understanding of our actual conditions. India can and must be a great country in the comity of nations only if we understand that the intelligentsia must be the creator of social transformation, a cultural renaissance and an economic transformation based upon agrarian reforms, and institution building. And all those interconnected changes must be linked to an ideology which makes no compromises with the negative elements of the consciousness of our ancient society.

I have referred time and again to land reforms. This is a vast and complex subject. My own direct experience in this field is limited. It is true that land reform can mean many things. Indeed, it could have meant something extremely meaningful in the fifties. But we missed the chance as we faltered and failed. In his passionate way, Wolf Ladejinsky has recorded this failure. Recalling the story of land reforms in India he said the following in 1965, and I make no apology for the length of the quotation:

We come back full circle to where we started: how to break the chains which still tie a multitude of farmers to conditions best discarded. One approaches the task with great diffidence. This is particularly true of one who was privileged to take part in the preparation of the agrarian reforms, part of the First Plan, and who has closely followed its fortunes since then. Moreover, one is aware of the fact that so much of the advice proffered the Government of India about what is wrong with this or that face of its economy sounds like cliché, resembling the endless repetition of an old, familiar, much-played-over record. With these caveats out of the way, the question still remains: What is to be done, on the tenurial issue in the time immediately ahead?

In attempting to answer this question, it is well to make clear what is now in India not meant by agrarian reform. The problems of land ceiling and, by the same token, of shifting large numbers of tenants to an ownership base are not the current issues. This is not the expression of a personal predilection. On the contrary, the failure to enforce land ceilings and institute a working purchase programme (from the point of



view of the would-be owner) has diverted the agrarian reforms of India from their original course: He who cultivates the land should own the land. But the above-ceiling lands are no more; they have disappeared into the hands of sons and daughters; uncles and aunts; cousins and second cousins; 'charitable' institutions; and, hard to believe but true, as in a case known to us in Madras, into a 'foundation'. Such are the realities and it would be impossible to unscramble what was too blithely and with impunity scrambled up under the very eyes of the state governments. What remains, therefore, of the reform programme is its less ambitious though important part: *The enforcement of security of tenure and with it the enforcement of fair rents — and the enforcement of the purchase provisions of non-resumable land.* This, in briefest form, is what the reform is about at the present times.

Later on Ladejinsky, addressing himself to those who exercise political power and political will, pours his heart out:

Not too many years ago it was the leadership of the Congress Party that had the vision, social conscience, and dedication to pioneer the reforms. This fact was of singular importance, for it is political leadership which makes or unmakes reforms. It is political leadership which provides the impetus or lack of impetus which decides between reform and 'reform'. There is no gainsaying the fact that the economic environment, population pressure on the land, and customary relationships sanctioned by a long history of social and religious traditions exert great influence on what happens to legislation designed to change old institutional modes. But this does not invalidate the main premise — that the content and implementation of agrarian reform are a reflection of a particular political balance of forces in a country. India, of course, is no exception to this; and it is India's political leaders who at one time strove with might and main to give birth to the agrarian reform idea — *zamindari* and non-*zamindari*. The party was then the authentic 'agrarian reformer.' Without going into the reasons why, it must be recorded that the all-important role has been gradually diluted to a point of non-recognition. It is not in evidence even at ceremonial party gatherings when proforma tributes are also paid to outworn party slogans. And yet, the party's active allegiance to the reform idea is more important now when early idealism has given way to the painful realities of attempted changes in the old rural order. More

concretely, unless the political leaders assume that role once again, the chances of improving the legislative content of the reforms and of implementing them are very poor indeed.

Another serious problem related to the one just mentioned is that the people in whose behalf the reforms were designed have never been, as was noted above, a party to the process of reform formulation and enforcement. They are objects of the reforms, but never means of helping formulate and carry them out. Whether consciously or unconsciously, the Congress Party had never reviewed this distinction with the consideration it deserves. The reliance is upon reluctant, numerically small bureaucracy to do the job. Reluctant officials and timid farmers are not a good combination to advance the cause of reform. Besides, the exceptions notwithstanding, no bureaucracy, however competent and devoted, as exemplified by the Japanese and Taiwanese cases, can carry out the task without the assistance of the top policy-makers and of the peasantry. To illustrate but one point: Even though many Indian villages have records of rights full of holes, the villagers know who is who, who owns what land, who rents from whom and at what rate, and much else. When nudged in that direction, their role is indispensable. There was a time when community development might have played the role of a catalyst in this regard, but it carefully shunned the reform problem for reasons best known only to itself.

The renewed and active interest can assume a number of forms, reaching out, in the first instance, to the state legislatures and long overdue 'tidying up' of enactments. More important than that is the task of forging the missing link — the participation of the tenants in the reform process. This means organizing them by the Congress Party — if need be into 'farm lobbies' — so that they may play an active role in all matters relating to agricultural development, including, of course, agrarian reform matters. Reforms in Japan and Taiwan demonstrated that adding this party to the 'bargaining table' is the essence of a meaningful reform. Since the initiation of such a movement cannot come from the tenants themselves, it must come from the centres of power just mentioned. This would not constitute an altogether novel experience for the party. The *kisan* (peasant) movement in the *zamindari* areas in the late nineteenth century was guided by the very people who later on

spawned the Congress Party. The latter displayed its great organizational talent in the struggle for independence, in ushering it in during the early perilous years, and in settling down to the tasks of running a new state. It has lacked no talent in soliciting the peasant vote since independence, and it should lack no talent to organize the farmers so that they may articulate and actively advocate their interests. Admittedly, this may not be easy and will take time. The cake of custom is hard to crack, and values and attitudes do not change overnight. But they are not forever. The Communist leadership in Hyderabad in 1948 and the same leadership in Madras, witnessed by this observer in 1952, demonstrated that the peasants respond to those who assume the role of their leaders and protectors and act upon it. Under such conditions customary predilections, when pitted against known self-interest, do change even in the Indian village. It is the Congress Party's opportunity to speed up that change.

There was a time when, under the care of the Congress Party, agrarian reform was a national issue, in the sense that the principles of tenurial reforms had been accepted as one of its major guiding policy principles. To be against reform was akin to being against independence, for it had been for some years past part of one grand design of the country's development. Is it too late to infuse the party with the old original meaning, when the welfare of India's submerged was one of its articles of faith? If the voluminous legislative enactments of some of the states give birth to reform measures of questionable value, must not then the leadership of the Congress Party somehow assert itself publicly, reaching out into every nook and corner of those states, carrying the message of people's rights in the land? Would not then the proponents of reform in the countryside take heart and make their contribution to an effective enforcement of what is now known as agrarian reform in India? Would not a good purpose be served if the Congress Party convened and examined the course of the reform movement since independence? It is possible that a deliberation of this kind might provide much of the needed stimulus to push agrarian reform in India off dead centre.

It has become fashionable to argue that land reforms are no longer relevant. This is a mere assertion without proof. What is worse is



that such assertions, to my mind, are made to justify petrification of political will which is becoming increasingly besieged by the power-structure of the rural areas. This power-structure is able to drown the rising consciousness in the miasma of caste and sub-caste politics.

If we do not summon the necessary will to create countervailing forces which could change the present equilibrium in our society, we really cannot go forward. The combination of rich farmers and industrialists interested only in maximizing their profits through a production pattern suited to the constricted elite market, prevents the widening of our market. In such a situation, the logic of circumstances would drive us to patterns of industrialization suited only for serving the export market and the narrow domestic market. Such a development is being promoted in the name of export-led strategy of growth triggered by the transnational corporations. If we were to succumb to this, it would, in time, generate acute social tensions and even conditions of anarchy. The greatest loser will of course be the narrow-minded vested interests which have grown in the last 35 years. History shows us how disasters are wrought by visions dimmed by pursuit of narrow interests and incapacity to see beyond the concern of day-to-day living.

There is, of course, a middle stratum, both in our agriculture and in our history, but they are politically weak. Given appropriate support they can certainly provide countervailing forces. But this would require a reorientation of our economics and politics in a conscious manner. And it would need to be done with a sense of urgency if we are to avoid conditions of extreme instability. We would require not merely the necessary political will and a new sense of direction but we would also need to generate a moral purpose. Only then we would be able to withstand exogenous pressures on our fragmented social, economic and political structure.

If India wishes to have credibility as a leader of the non-aligned states, fighting for equality, for ending of racial discrimination, for a new international economic order, we must, of necessity, design our own internal structure inspired by the ideas for which we fight internationally. There has to be harmony between our internal and external policies. In this view of the matter the problems of our foreign policy get indissolubly linked with the way we structure our society.

Immediately after independence, our foreign policy of non-alignment was sustained by one single factor. It was sustained by national pride generated by our national struggle. And its afterglow lasted for a little over a decade after independence. With passage of time and with the operation of electoral politics in our country, the national



pride began to be eroded from within. Our economic performance too began to falter. We appeared on the world scene dressed in tatters and with the outstretched hand of a beggar. We begged for food and we begged for aid. And despite planning, we created, as I have argued, a twisted and a grotesque capitalist structure. The Chinese struck a blow at our national pride. In the meantime, Jawaharlal Nehru almost lost his grip over the situation. He died in 1964. The institutions which he upheld and sustained by personal example began showing signs of stresses and strains. And today each one of these institutions is in a state of decay.

Our parliament generates a great deal of heat but never any light. No serious problems are ever discussed in that august body. The average standard of a parliamentarian has visibly declined. The condition of the state assemblies is, if anything, worse.

Another important prop of the state, namely, the civil services of the country are, for a variety of reasons, in a state of disarray. Politics, as it is played in our country, has wrought havoc with the morale and integrity of the civil services. Outside Parliament and the civil services, there are no functioning institutions. Our civic bodies do not function. The attempts to create institutions going deep down to the ultimate village, the Panchayati Raj system, or the earlier Community Development system, have, by and large, not taken root.

If institutions are decaying, the decay in ideology is even more blatant. Our Constitution commits us to concepts of equality, secularism, reason and rationality. But these ideas find no echo, howsoever faint, in the ideologies of our political parties. On the contrary, every political party has compromised and continues to compromise with caste and subcaste, with regionalism and with all kinds of narrow parochial considerations. Such compromises negate all the assumptions of our Constitution. Even the idea that science and technology will come to our aid in taking the country out of its poverty, backwardness and obscurantism is mocked at by *ad-hocism* and the so-called pragmatism. Inevitably, there are dissonances and contradictions testifying to the wisdom of Simon Kuznets' remarks which I quoted earlier that economic growth is a complex phenomenon involving the interaction between technology, ideology and institutions.

However, I do not take a fatalist view that we are destined to see the enactment of a Greek tragedy. We can certainly work out an appropriate ideology in terms of which we can judge the rightness and the wrongness of attitudes, policies and decisions, be they in the field of education, culture, social structures or in economics. There are no

inherently insuperable difficulties in restoring to our civil services the dignity and integrity which they have almost lost. There is still a possibility of rescuing self-reliance from being a mere phrase, by elaborating appropriate criteria for import of technology sustained by strong indigenous research, design and development effort. It is still possible to restore to our political processes a minimum standard of morality and free it from the corrosive influence of black money, provided there is a firm resolve to ensure that the integrity of the decision-making processes of the government are not materially eroded in the interest of the financiers. And above all, economic crimes, wrongs and trespasses need to be dealt with openly and put at par with the crime involved in killing human beings. Economic crimes are, if anything, more heinous than murder. In the latter case an individual human being loses his or her life; economic crimes put into jeopardy the entire society and a whole people.

It would seem to me that in the kind of world in which we are living, which has witnessed vast changes and vaster upsurge of human consciousness, we in India owe to ourselves and to posterity a supreme effort of will to take a new turn so that when the history of our times comes to be written, there will be passages reflecting the intensity of the effort which the intelligentsia of India made in overcoming the problems with understanding and wisdom. The effort itself would generate self-confidence and pride. And with our pride thus restored, India could once again play a creative role in international affairs and not a role confined merely to reacting to what others might do to us.

An exhortation to take a new turn is simple enough. To translate it in concrete terms is extremely difficult. A new turn certainly means gathering together all those who, while holding the national flag in their hands, would commit themselves irrevocably to upholding all the imperatives of the moral universe. It would mean a whole generation of people dedicating themselves towards an uncompromising and unrelenting fight to make our state wholly secular, leaving the domain of religion strictly to private concerns of individuals of varying faiths. It would mean consistent upholding of equality of human beings as an overriding principle over divisions of caste and creed. It would mean forging of solidarity of Indian society outside the caste system. All these years we have paid no attention whatsoever to social questions. The time has come to pay the closest attention to the problem of one half of our people, namely, women, rescuing them from the tyranny of our society — both Islamic and Hindu. Reform of Hindu and Muslim societies cannot be brought about by evoking mythological values or images from a selection of Hindu or Islamic scriptures.

The call for consolidation and strengthening of Hindu society would inevitably call forth a corresponding consolidation and strengthening of Muslim society or Christian society or Sikh society in India. One does not need too much astuteness to discern that howsoever well-meaning these calls might be, they have the objective effect of not only perpetuating our divisions but freezing them into hostile formations. We would need to create institutions at various levels, beginning with the village, through which alone human beings could be mobilized in a developmental effort in which they would be participants rather than recipients of largesse doled out to them by a *mai-bap* government. We should ask that under no circumstances should the elections to Panchayati Raj institutions, municipal bodies and corporations be postponed. They must be held on an appointed day and time and if the workings of Panchayati Raj institutions tilts the balance in favour of the powerful, it is not beyond human ingenuity to create within these institutions the countervailing force of the poor, the women and the middle strata of our society.

Finally, the time has come to seriously consider the size of our states from the point of view of management efficiency, developmental effort and historical consciousness of the people concerned. There is no reason why India with thrice the population of the United States should have only 22 states. We could easily have as many as 56 to 60 states.

Last but not the least, we need fresh debate on appropriate strategy for economic growth and development of our country which would reinforce social cohesion, national integration and bring about a growth pattern based upon ever-increasing enlargement of the domestic market and maximum mobilization of internal resources. In the world of today, soft options and short-term strategies to meet the requirements of balance of payments and unending borrowing would distort the whole pattern of development. This will bring us face to face with a bigger crisis than that which we are seeking to avoid.

Courage and irreverence towards old scriptures is the necessary precondition of our renewal. It is also a necessary precondition for saying something in the memory of a person like Sarojini Naidu to whom these lectures are dedicated.



## OUR PAST AND OUR FUTURE: AN INDIVIDUAL PERCEPTION

We live in an age of rapid and massive changes everywhere. The relations between peoples and nations are changing; political domination has been challenged, economic domination has been questioned. Economies are being rebuilt, societies are being re-modeled, traditional values and assumptions are being examined. Change is worldwide and every country and people is being subjected, more than ever before, to external forces and influences. The liberation movements in the Third World and decolonization have changed not only the concepts of relations between people, but are modifying ideas in the ex-Imperial countries, from questions of race or culture, down to questions of clothes and food habits. The Third World countries, inevitably, have been influenced by the cultural, social and political norms of their erstwhile rulers. Countries outside these categories, too, are extensively influenced by world events and currents of thought.

But notwithstanding all this, it is a fact that what is loosely called the "West" has, for a multitude of reasons, a position of dominance in today's world, and has a potential for undue influence worldwide. Even a single fact like the emergence of English as the most widely understood language in the world results in English (or American) values and ideas modifying thinking everywhere. In many countries there has been an abandonment of local languages and with that an erosion of local cultures and traditions particularly in formerly colonized countries. The West (and not only the English-speaking West) because of its affluence and sophistication, its economic, military and political power, and, above all, because of its self-assurance and implicit assumption of superiority, holds itself up as the ideal and model, and as the arbiter of standards for the rest of the world.

In India, on the one hand, there is the consciousness of an enforced period of liberation under alien rule, and of a traditional society that needs to be modernized to meet the challenge of the contemporary age. But on the other hand, the urge towards change is distorted by the universal assumption that the models of the West are the ones to emulate. The affluence and sophistication of the West has the effect on the rest of the World — in Eastern Europe, Africa, Latin America and even amongst the ancient cultures of Asia — of setting up not only such affluence and sophistication as desirable goals, but everything else that goes with those societies. The fashions of the West, whether bell-



bottoms or jeans or hippie-styles, or pop-music are flaunted as the hallmark of "modernized" youth. In its extreme form, the world — including India — judges itself by the West's criteria to the extent of irrationality. We get the phenomenon of the Bombay teenagers of some years ago who learnt the *sitar* because the Beatles learnt it. We have people in hot, tropical or equatorial countries sporting three-piece suits, neckties and shoes, though these must be penally uncomfortable. We have commercial firms in countries of brown or black people which produce pink-skinned golden haired dolls for children and skin bleaches for grown-ups.

At a different level, we have the Supreme Court of India giving out anti-government verdicts on fundamental rights and, specifically, the right to property in the form of land, overlooking the fact that this concept belonged to the West in the context of their historic and economic reality, which had no validity in India. In Western Europe, generally speaking, the bulk of the population has moved away from the land, and only a minority is directly dependent on it. In North America many farms are as large as some of the smaller countries elsewhere in the world — a situation that is possible because of the people-land ratio. The Supreme Court's verdict overlooked other parts of the world where this definition of "fundamental" rights does not prevail — not only the Communist countries but many countries in Africa, where land traditionally vested in the Chieftdom (not even in the Chief) and was in the *de facto* possession only of the person or persons who actually cultivated it.

We have taken, consciously or subconsciously, such traditions from the West though the West has had a record of exploring the world, planting a flag, and claiming alien lands, people and all as "property". We do not have such a tradition. In our own times, these traditions and their basic assumptions are under challenge on all sides. It is not realistic, therefore, to pick up the West's political and economic and other formulae, not as history from which to learn but as models to be unquestioningly copied. Somehow the populace at large does not take note of the fact that people who until yesterday told us that to want to be free was seditious are not today our best advisers on what constitutes freedom here. Those who sustain dictatorships around the world to suit their own objectives are not the best people to tell us how to be democratic. Those who create warlike situations around the world, and have the biggest and most lethal weapons history has ever seen, are not the best people to preach peace and disarmament to us. To implicitly accept an outside model, therefore, is to voluntarily accept subjugation of the worst kind — mental and psychological subjugation and a national

inferiority complex — not very good instruments for building a nation with much less better world in which our nation can exist in peace.

Somehow we in this country have to come to grips with the fact that this situation is damaging to all concerned. The fact is that political domination only existed so long as we accepted it — no longer. The same will be true of economic, cultural, and, above all, psychological domination. Such a relationship distorts the vision, not only of those who are dominated, but of those who dominate. Under its philosophy, if all the West is white, all the coloured are automatically consigned to an inferior status. If all the West is Christian (or claims to be) then all the non-Christians are relegated to a lower status, as are even those who took Christianity from the West, on the unstated assumption that the West was a civilizing influence, having made a present of God to the heathen. In the West the Jews have been considered objects of persecution; the Crusades were fought as "holy" wars, and, in our own times and in our own country, Hindus and Muslims who had lived as one people for 13 centuries and produced a closely linked culture, were made to believe they were enemies.

How do we assess contemporary forces of change — whatever their origins — in the larger perspective? How do they tally with our objectives in the longer term — and what are these objectives? How do the forces of change fit into the pattern of national and global realities and ideals? Is all change necessarily for the better and should we allow it to proceed under its own momentum, leading where it will? If not, do we apply a conscious process of choice, and direct change towards desirable goals? What are the standards by which we make a choice, and how do we implement such a choice?

In this country we start with the fact that we have our own very well-established value-system. India is one of the few countries which can claim to have a civilization, one of the two or three living civilizations of the world. What, if anything, do we have in our own traditions that is worth preserving? What does the rest of the world have to give us that would enrich us materially and spiritually?

Apart from the intrinsic merits of different civilizations, which are different perceptions of life, it is a basic proposition that a unicultural view and interpretation either of what is or what ought to be, is on par with the blind men who set out to discover the elephant, each one of them arriving at conclusions with no reference to anyone else's perceptions. There is a parallel in Rupert Brooke's poem "Heaven", in which the fish envisages heaven as a fishy ideal — a place with the slimiest slime and the fattest flies, with God as the biggest fish of all. These limited versions are, of

course, valid as far as they go — but they do not go very far. If we do not wish humanity to regress into an ever-narrowing circle of comprehension based on one set of values, we need more than one set of standards by which to judge and to comprehend.

At a very profound level, therefore, a plurality of value systems is an indispensable philosophical necessity. A plurality of thought processes *within* a system is no substitute for a totally different conceptual framework. For instance, a western musician unaware of other systems of music, will necessarily compose in the western idiom, however much of an innovator or a rebel he is. It is equally true of other systems of music. A Mozart could not have composed Karnataka music, nor could Thyagaraja have written a symphony. The two systems are conceptually, lyrically, philosophically totally different — only the notes of music are common. For a person from either tradition to understand the music of the other, it is not sufficient to have it rationally explained, it is necessary to be aesthetically and spiritually tuned to it, i.e., to translate oneself into the perceptions and responses of the other system. Without such attunement, one will only hear sounds, perhaps only noise, not music.

The existence of different systems makes it possible for each to be a supplement and a corrective to the others, an illuminating lamp held to the others. It has been said that whereas the European civilization directed its enquiry outwards into the Universe, constantly enlarging its field of knowledge and understanding, the Indian civilization has directed its enquiry inwards, delving the depths of the intangible. Each has added meaning to the discoveries of the other, but the totality of the results is very much more than the sum of the two. It is only on this basis that humanity can grow to an ever-widening comprehension and wisdom.

Leaving aside the many aspects of our tradition that are manifestly wrong and in need of change, what have we, in this country, inherited from our millennia-old history and thought that we need to preserve, for ourselves and for the world?

First and foremost is the concept of diversity just referred to. India has always implicitly accepted diversity as the norm, just as implicitly as some other cultures have insisted on uniformity as the norm, rejecting or persecuting those of other races or creeds or cultures. India has been a great acceptor — of races and peoples, of philosophies and religions. It has not, at any time, been a closed system, dubbing aliens and their ways as "barbaric", and rejecting them. Nor has it had an aggressive cultural attitude, believing others inferior and natural objects of conquest and suppression. The world has examples of both these



traditions. The Indian tradition has no contempt for others. This is something distinctive, and manifests itself in many ways.

One of them is what has often been called India's long tradition of tolerance. But the word "tolerance" is not adequately descriptive of the reality. Tolerance is a passive, even negative phenomenon. India did not, for instance, merely "tolerate" its many religions, whether of local or foreign origin. It reverentially accepted all the great teachers of mankind, and all the creeds that found their home in India, whatever their source — not only are Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism, which are of Indian origin, part of India's heritage, but Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrianism and Judaism are just as truly part of the Indian tradition. Islam and Christianity in India are only slightly younger than in the land of their birth and Judaism has been in India for a couple of millennia. In the past, the kings of India had wise men of various persuasions to hold debate in their courts, for the enlightenment and upliftment of the populace. In our own times, notwithstanding the fact that the country was partitioned on the plea that Muslims were a different nation, there are more Muslims in this country than in either of the offshoots of that partition; and there are more schools of Muslim thought and belief here than in many countries that describe themselves as Muslim. Indian history is also replete with instances of aliens coming to our shores and being met with a friendly welcome and acceptance.

This "tolerance" — this acceptance — was part of a much wider pre-occupation with the nature of Reality — a pre-occupation which, by its very nature, involved an uncensored freedom of thought and belief. One could be a monotheist, pantheist, atheist, or agnostic; there was no concept of heresy. By the same token, one could worship in a temple, a mosque, a Church or a synagogue, or merely in one's own home, or, indeed, not at all. In our own times, Gandhiji at his prayer meetings recited from the scriptures of several religions. The Attenborough film quotes Gandhiji as saying, about a small temple in his town of birth, that the priest read out equally happily from the *Gita* or *Quran*, because it did not really matter which Book was being read, so long as God was being worshipped. In fact, some interesting definitions of God have come out of India; the *Vedantas* define God as "universal consciousness", and Gandhiji, when asked to define God said "God is Truth". The classifications of the schools of Indian philosophy, talks of the *Aastika* or theistic *Vedas*, and the *Naastika* or atheistic *Vedas*, Buddhism being in the second category, and not any less accepted and honoured for that. This uncensored intellectual and spiritual freedom has rarely, if ever, been matched anywhere else, at any time in history. If Darwin, for instance, had been an Indian, he would not have been subjected to the attacks



made on him, not only in his own time, but in many parts of the world in our own time. There are communities in the West and in Western Asia, where the teaching of Darwinian theories is objected to on the ground that it contradicts holy writ.

This type of assumed conflict between science and religion, between Reason and Faith, has never been a problem in India — not only because of its tradition of intellectual and spiritual freedom, but because, in its search for Reality, Indian thought has not fallen into the trap of setting Reason in confrontation with Faith, or of setting Reason above and apart from other means of understanding. Comprehension has always been a total concept, where reason is a valid and indispensable instrument, but one which cannot tackle all Reality. But a clear distinction is drawn between the *supra* rational and the *irrational*. Illustrations of this proposition have been drawn, not from incomprehensible abstractions but from everyday experience. It is put to you that if you were to read a very rational dissertation on sugar, or on love, you are still no wiser on the nature of either. The only way to know what sugar is like, is to actually eat it, or to understand love, is to actually love. No amount of argument or logical explanation can help a blind person to understand light or colour. Nor can a person insensitive to music understand it by having it explained to him.

Clearly, under this concept of comprehension, the evidence of one type of perception, say of sight, can be different from the evidence of another type of perception, say of hearing, but the evidence of the two must not contradict each other. Equally, the evidence of the *supra*-rational must not contradict the evidence of Reason. To those who have not perceived, the ancients gave only a negative definition — it is not this, it is not this. To the blind you can only say, light is not sound, it is not smell, it is not touch. It was thus accepted that Reality could not be limited to the arbitrary parameters of the tangible, or the demonstrable, or even just the known.

It followed, of course, that nobody could tell others what to believe. Even a Guru is only a guide to discovery, the discovery having to be made by oneself. He could put the food before one — one had to do one's own eating. Hence the temples of India were places where ritual honours were done to the deities, and the priests were part of temple retinue. Neither was put there to tell the populace what to believe. For, of all the dangerous instruments that could be put in the hands of man, authority in the name of god was (and is) one of the most dangerous. Religious authority was, therefore, not institutionalized. One was not required to go to the temple, or even to pray. By the same token, one was

not prohibited from worshipping in places of worship of other persuasions. In fact the concept was not one of "other persuasions" at all, but of making available to humanity all the wisdom inherited from all sources and to leave it to the individual to find his own verity. He could believe not that which he was ordered to believe, but that which he found possible to believe.

Religion, defined as Reality, (or, as Gandhiji put it, Truth), to be sought by enquiry limited only by one's capacity to enquire, obviously, has a different connotation from religion defined in rigid terms of Reason versus Faith. The definition of Faith prevailing at different times in many parts of the world, when combined with an institutionalized authority, inevitably resulted in discrediting Reason. So at one point in history, the multitude was told that one could be absolved of one's sins if the religious authorities were paid the prescribed penalty. There was the fiat that the world was flat, that it was at the Centre of the Universe and that the sun went round it, and that those who believed differently would be excommunicated. There was the dreaded Inquisition in the name of a compassionate Christ who had said "He that is without sin, let him throw the first stone". In India, we have had, for instance, human sacrifice in the name of god, but it had no institutionalized authority to support it. The mainstream of thinking was different, and this stream continued to exist, and to challenge and discredit the untenable.

When, with the support of authority, Faith was made to cover anti-Reason, Reason had its revenge by discrediting Faith and people began to turn away from Religion, as it existed in its narrow definition; and also to more or less reject the idea of a non-tangible concept of Reality. The notion of a dictation of belief has been rejected in different ways. In those parts of the West where there is no coincidental underpinning of religion (as in some countries of Europe and elsewhere where religion is the vehicle of nationalism) Churches are being gradually deserted and turned into cultural centres, or even offices or warehouses. In some countries, the abuses of institutionalized religion and of its assumption of temporal power, have been attacked by strong, anti-religious political ideologies. At an earlier stage, the rejection of one kind of institutionalization resulted in a different kind of institutionalism, as when various Protestant denominations were set up. At an even earlier stage, in the initial centuries of the Christian era a Christian sect rejected the whole idea of institutionalization of Christianity, a fact which has become known from the Nag-Hammadi scripts. This sect held that institutionalized Christianity eventually put people to a choice between the Church and Christ, and they would have to choose the latter.

India's wide concept of religion, as a search for Truth or Reality, also meant that life and Reality were not fragmented into unconnected pieces. A discourse on philosophy, or religion, or ethics, or aesthetics, would be very similar, as they have a common point of reference, and are aspects of a total perception of Reality. So, in the case of a person like Gandhiji, the question that is often posed by Westerners, was he a saint turned politician or a politician turned saint, is generally not asked by Indians. To the Indian, either consciously or instinctively, the assumption is that everything one is, is dictated by that central point of reference, whether individual or collective; there is no basic conflict between being a man of thought and a man of action. The notion of a *Karma Yogi* is not new.

India's total view its — holistic view, in contemporary scholarly jargon — embraces everything, conceptual and material, live and inert, time and space, in one limitless continuum, and human life is only one manifestation of this totality. This obviously excludes a homocentric view of the universe which has prevailed in many parts of the world, and even today rules attitudes, notwithstanding the evidence to the contrary of modern science. The vision of the human being as part of a much bigger whole, and the need for him to exist in harmony with the rest of the universe, tangible and intangible, has been expressed by the ancient Indians in many ways and at many levels so that every human being, whatever his spiritual or intellectual capacity, could comprehend it. At one end of the scale are the abstract thought and subtleties of the *Upanishads*, and at the other, the mythology which depicts god in the form of all kinds of creatures — creatures of the sea, the earth, and the air; there are in-betweens of various concepts defined, such as *Lakshmi* or *Saraswati*, or the ideas of Creation Preservation and Destruction, as embodied in the Trimurtis.

The notion of Divinity is all — pervading. Different animals and birds are sacred to different deities. The doctrine of rebirth links human kind to all kinds of existence, and to time and space. In this scheme of things, from the material to the non-material is not a difficult transition. From the proposition that an ant's body might have been built of the flesh of one's dead grandfather, it is only a step to the proposition that the person of the grandfather might be re-incarnated in an ant or some other creature, or that the entities behind either of them are part of a wider Entity. The *Vedantas* have it that the individual self is part of the Whole. The human form is merely the most evolved of all, and therefore, in the cycle of rebirths, one who has attained this form is fortunate. The only condition superior to human life is that of transcending the cycle of births and deaths.



Darwin, arising from a totally different civilization with a totally different orientation comes to a conclusion which has a comparable version of the unity, the continuity and change of creation; which complements the Indian vision of the Universe as One. But naturally, those who believed that Man was created in the image of God, that he was separate and superior, objected to being told that he shared an ancestor with the apes — worse, that the ancestry of both went back to even "lower" forms of life. Such people attacked Darwin, and continue to attack him, though continuous scientific discoveries sustain Darwin rather than his opponents. Modern science, (largely of western origin) — astronomy, the earth sciences, prehistory, theories of time and space and matter — present a fascinating parallel to the old Indian vision of the Universe.

The old homocentric theory of the west had the corollary that everything in the Universe was created for the benefit and enjoyment of man. It is a creed that has sanctioned the depletion of the earth to satisfy the appetite of man. Wild life has been nearly wiped out, the splendour of untamed jungles has been reduced to the controlled tameness of gardens, and everything has been conquered — nature, space, and other inferior men. It is only now that the results of this spirit of conquest — and of what is called the consumer society — is beginning to be visible, and the ecologists and environmentalists are warning the world of the dangers this destructive homocentrism. The truth is that reverence for creation has to be bred into individuals and societies, and a collective human self-abnegation and compassion created. Ideals and principles can only be real if lived, and cannot be learnt by rote like multiplication tables; and to be lived, they have to be part of one's mental environment conditioning. If the philosophy of domination is built societies, it is not possible to eradicate it by argument alone, for the human being is not made up solely of reason and logic.

A theme that has been fairly constant in Indian thought is *ahimsa* — from the time of Buddha and Asoka, to our own contemporary, Mahatma Gandhi. It is a concept that is inadequately translated as "non-violence". It is better rendered as "non-infliction of suffering", though even this is only a literal translation that cannot convey the nuances of compassion and love associated with the word. Such a concept is perhaps a natural offshoot of the idea of existence as a totality.

The concept of Man himself is a total one, the material and non-material Man. The Indian civilization is probably the earliest to think of Man as body, mind, ego. At every level, whether spiritual, as in *Vedanta*, or at the physical, as in *Ayurveda*, it took account of the human entity in



its totality. The *Vedanta*, seeking to control the self, starts with the body, and works its way up. The *Ayurvedist*, seeking to cure bodily ills, recognizes the effect of the non-material man on his body. The human entity, in turn, is a part of society and both are integral parts of the Universe. *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* —the World is a family.

The standards for men and society were geared to help them to tackle the complexities of both the known and the unknown. The notions of good and evil were not neatly packaged, with the seal of institutionalized authority on them. The *Upanishads* and the great Indian epics portray the complexities, leaving the conclusions to be deduced. In the Mahabharata, is Karna bad, since he is on the side of the Kauravas? Is Yudishtira good, who, unmindful of his kingly responsibilities, gambled away his kingdom and his wife? Was Drona, who was bound by his promise to Arjuna, right in demanding the thumb of Ekalavya? A child brought up on these stories or on the *Panchatantra* is bound to grow up with a different concept of life from one fed with stories of prince charming killing a dragon to win a beautiful princess. The nearest parallel to the Mahabharata that one can think of outside India is the world of Shakespeare — a deep vision of life, which, unfortunately, seems to be representative only of Shakespeare, and not of a whole civilization; as Francis of Assisi with his universe of brethren, represents only himself.

India's mental and spiritual landscape is strewn with gigantic concepts — the cosmic dance of Siva, the *Viswaroopa* of Krishna in the Bhagavadgita, a vision which, even at a non-theistic level is impressive, of all creation and existence streaming endlessly into Eternity and Infinity, controlling neither its origin nor its destination. There are some uniquely Indian concepts *Buddhi* and *Dharma*, which have no exact equivalents in English. They have been inadequately translated as "Wisdom" or "Enlightenment", and "Righteousness". But these limited translations do not wholly convey the value- systems that are distilled into these concepts. They transcend, but do not negate, our normal, limited, notions of good and evil. Is a tiger evil when it kills the deer, or a scorpion evil when it stings a man who is trying to save it? This is not as theoretical as it might sound. Is a hangman evil when he kills a condemned criminal? Is a soldier right to kill an enemy soldier? In our own times, we have not settled the question, to what extent should one obey authority — say, a Hitler's authority? If the notion of authority is rejected, is organized society possible, or social and human progress? It is only a total view that can come up with these perspectives — a view that can see creation, preservation, and destruction as aspects of the same Reality; that can discover the zero and see that it is not a negations of numbers; that can see Death as one of the divinities (*Yama*

*Dharmaraja*), as the doorway to liberation — *vimochana* a friend, not an enemy.

We have taken centuries, millennia, to build up these concepts; to build up a capacity to evolve such concepts; to build up a language that can enshrine these concepts; and to evolve a society that translated these concepts into a way of life. It has taken the world many millennia to produce a Buddha or a Christ. The caveman's society could not have produced them, or a Gandhi or an Einstein. How do we build a world where hatred and aggressiveness are not given respectability in the name of limited loyalties of nation, race, or creed? It has to be the whole world, for partial remedies are not really feasible. The responsibility for Hitler and the Nazis does not lie solely with Hitler and the Nazis, or even with Germany, but with an entire world system where aggression benefited the aggressors. How do we build a world where Christ does not get crucified, an Einstein is not at the mercy of a Hitler and Gandhi does not get assassinated? A world in which might does not suppress rights? A world in which those who are too civilized to fight are not at the mercy of those who are too savage to love? What is our age contributing to civilization, and what is India contributing to the making of a better world?

Our ancient values are on trial in a new context. India's freedom struggle was a rejection of the system of domination of one nation by another, of one race by another. India itself has not despised or dominated other peoples. Indians going abroad in centuries past (e.g., to South East Asia) have gone peaceably, as one more element in the cultural and racial mix of those centuries, in the same way as India accepted peoples coming into India — the Arabs, Europeans, Parsis, Africans — as new elements in the racial and cultural mix that was India. India opposes the world economic system of one economy dominating another. Will the logic be carried, hopefully, to the rejection of one culture dominating another?

If domination is rejected, does India have an answer to the continuous pressure created by aggressive nations, aggressive races, aggressive politics and economics and aggressive cultures? The price of freedom, it has been said, is eternal vigilance. India has a long history of being conquered by any invader who chose to do so. To have won the struggle for national political freedom is no guarantee of our maintaining that freedom (much less defending the cause of freedom worldwide), or of attaining economic and cultural freedom. In a world where might — military or economic — still constitutes right, how does India counter the power of the greatest military machine the world has seen, and the might of immense wealth which underpins the strategies of military and

economic domination? Is "himsa" viable in the face of military attack? Is a world loyalty viable in the face of aggressive alien nationalisms which forces a defensive nationalism on us?

India has certain advantages and strengths that it can bring to bear on any cause it chooses to espouse. Though its geographical size is a fraction of that of any of the large countries, as a nation, its size, its long history, its ancient civilization and sense of identity, and its strategic location give it an important status. Hence it wields a certain weight on the world scene and has a self-assurance and capacity for achievements that can lend substance to its policies. At all times, including in the gloomy decades and centuries of its colonial eclipse and its own decadence, India has continued to produce people of high intellectual caliber, spiritual eminence, and literary and artistic achievement. Modern and India's greatest leader, Mahatma Gandhi, was in the Indian tradition — not only in his upholding of ancient values such as "ahimsa", but in carrying this value to a steady refusal to hate the British while rejecting their Imperial rule in India. He was Indian in his capacity to attack the abuses in Indian society, in the tradition of a long line of rebels and reformers, from Buddha and Mahavira onwards right down to our times. He was equally Indian in his capacity to learn from other peoples and cultures including — Western — from Tolstoy and Ruskin and others — and to keep his heart and mind open to whatever of worth the world, including Britain, could offer him.

With its status and strength and distinct ideality, India has taken its place in today's world by throwing in its lot with the oppressed, but with no rancour towards the oppressors. India has been on the side of freedom struggles everywhere, whether against political, racial or other kinds of domination and oppression. In fact India's own liberation movement opened up the chapter of a general struggle for liberation world-wide. From time to time one comes across echoes of a distinctly Indian philosophy of struggle. Indians are familiar with Gandhiji's comments to the British judge sentencing him to several years of imprisonment. You have to do your duty, and I, mine — or words to that effect. Decades later, the Zimbabwean leader, Robert Mugabe, asked how he could negotiate, in a free Zimbabwe, with a racist Ian Smith whom he had fought until then, replied that during the conflict he, Mugabe, did what he had to do, and Ian Smith did what he had to do; but now, in the new context, they would have to work together. Martin Luther King, the leader of the Black American civil rights movement, openly declared his acceptance of Gandhian principles. Gandhiji also led the first struggle against Apartheid in South Africa, and not surprisingly, India was the first country to raise the issue of Apartheid in the UN. It has



continued to maintain a consistently firm line on this issue. Apartheid is not only a question of the racism and inhumanity perpetrated in South Africa, though that in itself is a serious enough issue; it is a question of South Africa only being an extreme manifestation of the assumption of superiority by the white races of the West — especially the politico-economically dominant "West", which in fact sustains the racism of South Africa, and is itself racist in different degrees, though less blatantly and crudely than South Africa. It was natural for India, with its ancient traditions of tolerance and its recent rejection of colonialism to throw in its lot with the oppressed races, and against the whole philosophy of racial intolerance.

India's long history of a continuous civilization and of intellectual achievement has enabled it to achieve a political and scientific capacity that makes it possible to challenge the West's claim to a monopoly of science and technology on the one hand, or of the world's resources, on the other. So, though the previous history of such monopolies is with us, India has rejected outside attempts to limit its nuclear (or other) technology, and has also claimed new resources, such as those of the Antarctic and the Ocean bed, for the whole of mankind.

At the dawn of the era of decolonization, India, more or less blazing the trail of decolonization, was able to enunciate the principle of non-alignment — a principle that India's first Prime Minister declared in the Indian Parliament as early as 1946. It denoted, on the one hand, India's opposition to the domination of the world by the great powers, singly or collectively, and by the same token, a rejection of the idea of being forced into hostility and confrontation with any of them. It was also a rejection of a policy based on the division of the world into warring groups. India's innate rejection of a philosophy of hatred, and its genius for a co-operation and conciliation (in another context called India's "tolerance") was demonstrated in the signal role played by it in forming the new, multiracial, non-monarchical, Commonwealth. A reference was earlier made to the fact that though India was partitioned on the theory that Indian Muslims were a separate "nation", India has the second largest Muslim population in the world after Indonesia, and Islam continues to be an integral and important part of the Indian religious and cultural complex. In fact there is continued Muslim migration into India from areas that were set up as Muslim homelands — but no movement of Muslims in the reverse direction.

India has a unique potential for influencing affairs in favour of a better, more just and humane world order. Such an order is only meaningful if seen in a comprehensive context — not only political but



economic, cultural and social. It is not possible to have justice and equality in one place alone. Political equality — as we now have over most of the world — is meaningless if inequalities and domination continue in other sectors, such as economic, racial or cultural. India's assets in backing up its policies in favour of equality are both material and non-material. Its size, history, strategic importance, natural and human resources are well known. Its intangible assets, too, are important. Unlike most of the major countries that have been in the mainstream of world history — including major Asia countries — it has no history of aggression and conquest and is, by and large, not feared or mistrusted, especially by the majority of the Third World countries, whatever their ideological moorings. In fact some of them are unafraid of India to such an extent that they find it possible to follow, without fear of consequences, policies that threaten India's vital interests. In standing up for freedom — political, economic, cultural, racial and other — it has history on its side, because we are living in what is, par excellence, the age of liberation movements and forces. Those countries that seek to maintain domination and hegemony through a variety of ways might win a few battles on the way but the trend of the war, in the longer run, is against them. Nothing else would explain the retreat of the British from India, the French and the Americans from Indo-China, and all the Western powers from one country after another in Africa.

The West Europeans were not lacking in power, military, economic or political. Their opponents had no power, except the desire to be free. In today's world, it is possible for a small, feeble nation like Cuba or Vietnam to defy a colossus like the USA. To occupy a hostile population, in today's world context, whatever the apparent disparities of power, is very much more difficult than it ever was before. And this proposition is valid for more than the West alone.

On the other hand, it is true that the tendency to dominate, vanquished in one form, tends to re-appear in other ways. Notwithstanding the non-alignment adhered to by the majority of the newly liberated nations, they are still the playground of the great powers and their power games. Since the Second World War, all the wars have been wars fought on the soil of these countries of the Third World — and most of them have been great-power wars by proxy.

The fact that history is today with the freedom movements does not absolve us in India, or those outside, in the majority of the world who are fighting for freedom and human dignity, from the need for cogent and purposefully conceived policies, the need to marshal political will and intelligent strategies to support their policies. Good causes can be ruined by bad policies.

If India is to have an effective, sustained and beneficial role in establishing a new, egalitarian and humane world order, a new human society and culture and a peaceful and constructive life-style worldwide, attention has to be paid to some basic factors.

Policy has to be conceived on a broad front, taking into account what is normally differentiated as external and internal or material and non-material. For, in truth, these cannot be treated as separate, if meaningful results have to be achieved. If we continue to be poor, we cannot have the same impact as if we were economically self-reliant. If we were open to military aggression and defeat, we would be at the mercy of whoever wished to put us out of the way. But tangible and material strength is closely tied with matters like our political stability, which, in turn, is not possible without national unity. If we had all these assets but still lost our sense of identity and accepted foreign cultural domination, we shall end up mentally prisoners of those whose purposes are different from ours, and will tamely go where it suits others; we would not even be aware that we had lost our self-respect and independent judgment. If such were the case we would have had to accept Churchill's sneer about Gandhiji being India's naked fakir. We had enough collective self-assurance to go on our way — hopefully, Churchill and his ilk would have the grace to be ashamed of that taunt.

In the contemporary period, there is some small understanding of this problem in that there is an awareness that such slogans as "freedom of information" can be used to the detriment of poorer nations, so that they see themselves in disparaging images through western media. But the problem is much wider than that. Our present education system is such that the decision-making elites know more about the West than about their own country and their own heritage. Their attitude to Indian languages is patronizing, and they learn or use it to the unavoidable minimal extent. There seems to be no awareness that a language is something very much more than a means of communication — it is the vehicle of the civilization of a people, a repository of its values and ideals; it moulds a people's attitude and philosophy. If, as is generally accepted, great poetry or literature cannot really be translated, it is even more true that the spirit of a whole language and the civilization that created it cannot really be translated into another. In India we have, on the one hand, a rich heritage of our own; on the other, we have acquired English, a language representing a wholly different civilization and tradition, and with it we have gained many valuable ideals, of immense benefit to us. We have paid a heavy price for this acquisition, in a long period of enslavement. It would be foolish to throw away either.

Our policies, internal and external, have to be more dynamic, and aim at creating overall situations in which our individual objectives would be a natural growths. For instance, we are making half-hearted and only partly successful attempts to tackle the problem of our underprivileged communities, or of our uncontrolled population growth, or of unemployment. The decisive role that a carefully planned, firmly executed plan of compulsory education and professional training could have played in more or less solving these problems in our 36 years of independence does not seem to have been grasped by our policy makers. As of now, we still do not have an effective scheme of compulsory universal education, or a nationwide scheme of professional training for school leavers. There is certainly no sign of a careful planning of the content of such education as is in fact given to ensure that our students get the best of our own and the western traditions.

On the domestic front, what we now have is a series of unrelated, unco-ordinated decisions, either based on trite slogans, or on spot remedies. Thus, in individual limited sectors, limited progress can be claimed; there are more schools, more industries, more jobs. But in the overall picture, there is also a steady growth of the numbers of the poor, the illiterate, the unemployed, the underprivileged. There is also a growth in crime, in conflict and confrontation.

There is a similar lack of constructive policy-making in the international sphere, a failure to recognize our need, and more importantly, our capacity, to bring about a global situation which would bring, in its train, the results we wish to see, and will pre-empt that which goes against our interests as well as of the forward looking world community. India's foreign policy has not recognized that our international role and status are not only linked with our own internal progress and cohesion, but also closely linked with the strength and progress of those countries that are our allies in the war against inequality and domination. It is closely linked with the international strength and influence these allies can wield. It is another way of saying that India's freedom and strength depends on the progress of these other nations, and to that extent, exclusively nationalistic policies are no longer valid. There can be no progress or security for us if the countries that pursue a policy of domination can control the policies of our natural allies, such as our neighbours, in such a way that they become threats to our security. Nor can there be progress for us if those, whose economic strength and co-operation could underpin our own economic and political stability — such as the countries of Africa — either struggle with their problems unaided, or have their policies and resources controlled from the outside, while we work in rivalry with them, as we in actual fact



do, despite plausible slogans. The starving nations of Africa are at the mercy of those who wish to buy their allegiance with aid; whilst it is in our power to help them to build up their own agricultural production and thus build up their wealth, which would provide a further basis for co-operation in trade and industry and a mutually beneficial growth of economic and political strength.

The so-called North-South dialogue will be a futile exercise if the countries of the South put themselves separately at the mercy, and under the control of the North, instead of being jointly strong, as was envisaged at Bandung. In fact the notion of collective strength has been pioneered by some of the strongest countries, whose past policies have been based on domination and whose present policies appear to be geared to maintaining this position of privilege, namely, the EEC. The countries which most need it — the so-called South — and the countries most capable of pioneering collective strength, particularly India, have not only not had the vision to think about it in advance but have shown themselves tardy even in drawing lessons from the experience of others.

India today lives as in a dream, a mental prisoner of the West. There is plenty we need to learn from the West — its science and technology, its organization and efficiency, its political and social egalitarianism. But learning from the West is one thing, and to abjectly copy everything from them is another. We are now blindly copying everything western, from the constitution to jeans. Clever people even make plausible arguments — the constitution is good, it is simply that we have to work it properly. In other words, the people are for the constitution, not the constitution for the people. This kind of sophistry cannot hide the fact that we recognize Indian scientists and artists after they are recognized in the West, and gave an award to Mother Theresa after she won the Nobel Prize. Is this degree of inferiority complex justified by our heritage, a good deal of which even now is relevant to the fundamental needs of the world? How can India pioneer anything — a new society within India, or a just world order — if it cannot do its own thinking, and does not have the self-confidence and conviction to follow up its independent thinking with independent policies?

Today India appears to pose to itself the choice of going back to its traditions or of rejecting its traditions in favour of western values. It is not possible to go back, in the sense that the revivalists and the obscurantists would have us do. But to move forward presupposes going on in a sustained course of progress — a continuity — which enables us to build further on that which we have achieved, our own traditions and past. This does not preclude our benefiting from our modern, western



links. As Gandhiji put it, India should have its windows open to the four winds of the world, but should not be blown off its feet. The material affluence of the West, combined with our poverty, is distorting the vision of our policy-makers who appear to function on the assumption that the removal of our poverty is synonymous with emulating western life-styles and western philosophies of life. Material prosperity is essential, but only one element in life. But we should guard against a single-minded pursuit of material possessions, which leads us on the road to a mass-production-oriented, mass organized, machine-dominated existence where the human being too, becomes mass-produced. People in the mass would go to work, like ants, returning to cubbyhole tenements like battery of chickens. Thought too, would be mass-produced with the massive churning out of impersonal, printed material, and people would all "think" alike — which is a very plausible way of saying that nobody would think. Humanity would then be well within reach of Rupert Brooke's fishy Heaven.

India cannot lose sight of the fact that material progress cannot be delinked from that other dimension of human life that is not limited by material aspirations. The improvement of the material conditions of our life has to be a part of a wider concept of a full and happy life for our people, with their individual and group entities intact, but in harmony with each other, in harmony with the rest of the world, and in harmony with nature and the universe.

How can we be united, without being uniform? How can we be in harmony, without being identical? How can we save, for ourselves, and the world, India's precious heritage of that intangible dimension of life, which is so closely linked, on the one side, with our concept of diversity and unbounded freedom, and on the other, with the concept of an all-embracing unity in the light of which we interpret everything — matter, morals, religion, art or the individual self?

Thanks to our deeply ingrained heritage (but no thanks to the system under which we function today) India is still safe for diversity. We often hear the cliché about India's Unity in Diversity. Unity is being verbally preached but *de facto* a confrontationist system is sowing discord and conflict. Diversity is being upheld, but a blind policy of emulating the West is building up a uniformity that is depriving India of its Mind.

If the artificial boundaries of nation, race, or creed have to be removed, it cannot be done by the weak going on their knees to the strong, as India appears to be doing in the so-called North-South dialogue. Gandhiji did not go on his knees to the British Empire. His

strategy, in its essence, was to make the Empire unworkable. India must show up the old jingoistic slogans of "God, King and Country", or holy wars, or patriotism, for what they really are — pleasant labels for the unpleasant phenomenon of a limited loyalty, whether national, racial, religious or other, by which one can justify aggression and persecution — "himsa" — of others outside those boundaries. We will not do away with the injustices of the international system if we cannot make common cause, constructively and in amity, with fellow-sufferers; and this, without animosity to the oppressors, as we did during our freedom struggle. Equality cannot be built by the weak begging the strong for mercy and charity.

So this is the challenge for India — to use its material, human, intellectual, cultural and philosophical resources to regenerate itself into a truly free, just and humane society, and simultaneously to strive for a similar world society. The two are different aspects of the same objective, for, a humane and peaceable India is not possible if it lives in an aggressive world atmosphere. If India is today at the receiving end of oppression, it is an advantage in that the fat and the well-fed do not usually want to change anything. It is the dispossessed and the suffering who do. The colonial system was not changed by the rulers but the ruled. India has the material and spiritual resources, without which this exercise is not possible. India's greatest achievements have been the achievements of peace. It is now on the threshold of new opportunities, which will put to the test every resource India can bring to meet the challenge of a new age.

## OF TIME, MEMORY AND CHANGE

P N Haksar mentions he has never given an interview, except once on All India Radio. These conversations with him grew over several weeks before he could be convinced that they capture the essence of his philosophy of life. While his memory on things past remains infallible in details, he is reluctant to talk about his years in governance and in power. Instead, the discussions focus on his wide-ranging interests in photography, cooking, poetry, education, culture and in our ancient scriptures. All these put together, reveal much about the man, his Nehruvian vision of India, and his liberal humanism.

**Geeti Sen:** Since this discussion is about time and the quality of memory, we could begin with your photographs. Your portraits of those dear to you, as well as of some eminent persons, are not casual snapshots. They capture the essence, the persona. In this sense, they become memorable. Yet you have mentioned the fact that the photographs taken of Mrs Gandhi and Mujibur Rahman, maybe ten or twelve pictures — were all shot in the course of 15 minutes on the river — without Mrs Gandhi being even aware of this happening. How did this come about? How did your long-standing interest in photography begin?

**P N Haksar :** Photography and cooking have been for me in my life what tranquillisers are for others. I find the kitchen a soothing place — just as I find capturing the essence of human beings I have known, of places visited, and things seen, a means of transcending the daily routine of life.

**GS :** Speaking about time: There are two ways, essentially, of looking back at one's past. The first is a fragmented past, where events and people stand out vividly in memory as, let's say, remarkable persons captured in photographs. The other way is to see them as images which coalesce, one into another — like the course of a flowing river, or like the process of time. Which is it for you?

**PNH :** Let us say in terms of modern science that I am genetically endowed with memory! My recollections take me back almost to the dawn of my consciousness, to events and places in 1918 when I was five years old. Certain events and persons stand out in my memory — but in recalling them there is continuity as well as change.

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Text of discussion with Ms Geeti Sen, Editor of the *IIC Quarterly*. It is reproduced from the Spring 1996 issue of *IIC Quarterly*.  
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I cannot call photography a process. I photograph persons, places and things; but “process” is an abstraction — a historical process in which historical persons like Mrs Gandhi and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (tragically, neither of them are here) were part and parcel of that process. But I did not photograph them as part of a process. No!

**GS :** Turning to the first volume of your autobiography, *One More Life*. Here also you record happenings, events, “portraits of people” as you grew up. It speaks of a system of values, ingrained when you were a child — values that are now changing in your own life. This brings me to another question: Do you believe in your own life as progressing on a linear course? or do you see it as cyclical — as returning to an earlier set of values?

**PNH :** I don’t think life can be expressed as geometry, or in mathematical terms. Life at an individual level is multidimensional, it is neither cyclical nor linear (it could even be a parabola or hyperbola) — but it goes forward, in a sense.

The idea of cyclical time is certainly there in Indian thought — but it is not basic to India. There is, in fact, a Sanskrit *sloka* which comes to my mind just now, as against the cyclical idea! *Punarapi jananam punarapi maranam, punarapi janani jatharai shayanam; iha sansare bahu-dustare kripaya pare pahi murare* (O dear God! Save me from this cycle of birth and death, and then again resting in my mother's womb and being born again!).

**GS :** Using your own term of “mindsets” in your editorial, many of us have a mindset about the linear progression of time — not only in our own lives but in the course of history. You have it too, possibly, with your background in the sciences and with the idea of evolution — a word used in your editorial in *Man & Development*. Then, implicit from “evolution” is the term “progress”, and from there, the term “development”.

These three words: evolution, progress and development, frame us in a 'mindset' of the twentieth century — which I think needs to be questioned at the end of this century. (It is already being questioned by the post-modernists.)

When you think about it, is there any word in Sanskrit which translates precisely into progress? Is there such a concept in Indian thought, of progress?

**PNH :** There is a word *pragati* for progress, meaning precisely, moving forward. The word progress was coined by a man called J B Bury who wrote a book called *The Idea of Progress*, reflecting the optimism of



western Europeans who had colonized the world and believed that they were destined to rule, inevitably.

This idea was badly shaken by the First World War, after which people no longer talked of progress as inevitable. That brought together the idea of consciousness as a critical element in human existence on this earth; and how that consciousness is not circumscribed but is ever open. This I think, quintessentially, is an Indian philosophical notion. It is called transcendentalism, and universalism. So, that I believe in; but I never believed in the idea of progress as inevitable.

**GS :** Positioned today, the post-modernist philosophy is deeply anguished, one might say, in reversing this notion of progress. Whether you look at literature or art, there follows a sense of deep insecurity.

**PNH :** Personally, I do not like these dichotomies in which people engage in concepts like modernity and post-modernity. They are meaningless words to me. In the realm of the spirit, of human enquiry, in the sciences which we know about, there are certain areas which you cannot quantify, you cannot determine; whereas in nineteenth century Europe, everything was deterministic.

**GS :** In one of your editorials, you speak with eloquence, espousing humanism. Would you describe this humanism as being western in source? Can we overlook the fact that you spent the greater part of the nineteen-thirties in London?

**PNH :** I am not a western humanist! I am very truly a humanist in terms of our Vedas and Shastras and Upanishads. Look at the beauty of Isho Upanishad, look at the beauty of Katho Upanishad, and the Chandog Upanishad. One of the most fascinating dialogues is between Nachiketa and Yama, where he wanted to ask Yama to give him immortality. Yama replies, I can give you anything but immortality, if you want 1,000 years I can give you that; but life must cease; at an individual level — there is no immortality. So I don't think it is a western concept at all. It is very much an Indian concept, or I might say Bharatiya concept, but not a western concept — unless you assume that the western concepts are also changing.

**GS :** In your impassioned editorial in *Man & Development* of June 1995 about the tragedy of mindsets, you are reviewing 50 years which represent your own lifetime and the vast “changes and upheavals” which have taken place as a result of aroused human consciousness. You mention that at the beginning of this century, say 1910, no one could have predicted the two world wars, no one could have anticipated the

end of colonialism, no one could have anticipated the degree of suffering caused. As many as 165 million human beings perished in the wars and conflicts of the twentieth century. Then you say that the reason possible for this is that we are not able to avoid mindsets, we are not able to confront the realities that exist.

India is now approaching 50 years of independence and yes, I think we have made considerable advances on many fronts, if you want to use that word. But now at the end of the twentieth century, we are also facing the most serious problems ever: A problem of credibility of the government; problems of governance, and whether there is any governance left, and on what levels. If one were to look back, would you be able to think as to why and where we have gone wrong? Was it due to a mindset?

**PNH :** Yes, in a sense it was a mindset. The mindset was like this; we were colonized by the West, and why did the West dominate us? The conclusion was that they dominated us because they had power; on they came with their big guns, aircraft and technologies and represented “industrial civilization”. Therefore, it was concluded that in order to have our own security after independence, the building up of industrial infrastructure was of prime importance.

That was a mindset, and that is why so sensitive a person as Nehru had said that Bhakra Nangal, Durgapur Steel Plant, Damodar Valley Corporation are the new temples of India. He said that, although I do believe that within himself — and this is my guess — within himself, he was aware that human beings do not live by bread alone. This is evidenced by his very reflective writing in 1958 which he called *A Basic Approach*, published in the Congress journal in 1958. In those days the Congress used to have intellectual pretensions and so they ran the journal, and the Nehruvian approach is still worth reading and pondering over.

**GS :** Was this a recanting of basic ideas on technology and progress?

**PNH :** No, he goes into a whole range of things called ends and means. Everybody equated, as it were, the word progress (which you have used) with material aspects: Have you got steel plants, have you got machinery, have you got telephones, have you got electricity as a source of power, energy? And so we set about this, and since we were an agricultural country, the harnessing of rivers, irrigation canals was for us a new direction.

**GS :** You know what havoc is being caused now by the Sardar Sarovar Dam and other dams. Now we have got to a point where it is actual destruction by dams causing this. No doubt, even the earthquake that took place in Uttarkashi showed that the seismologists were right in their prediction, that these dams can cause terrifying consequences.

**PNH :** I am not pleading for big dams. Science always discovers its own follies, or technology discovers its own follies. For instance, which scientist, Einstein included, thought that human beings would convert this little atom into the atom bomb; but there is a mindset called power. But we do require irrigation systems, and we can have a series of small dams, not necessarily large ones.

In a sense, the dam culture was inspired by Franklin Roosevelt. In 1930, the United States and the whole western world was in the grip of a huge crisis. Everything was breaking down; the share markets collapsed, values collapsed. There was vast unemployment for which, in America, the response was what Roosevelt called the New Deal; and one of the monuments of the New Deal is the Tennessee Valley Authority. People don't know about it but the Tennessee Valley Authority gave work to a lot of people. At Nagarjunasagar, near Hyderabad, I have seen with my own eyes so many men, women from villages working, digging the dam; so it is a question of making a judgement on the basis of available knowledge, whether in some places big dams can work or small dams will do. In Switzerland, because it is a small country, there has been a series of small dams.

**GS :** You would then say that the richness of this country consists in its diversity and localized ecology, its localized understanding of what is required and essential; instead of thinking big, if we were to think little, would that be the answer?

**PNH :** No, I am against the mindset which postulates things in “either/or” format. It all depends. Now, in areas of India where there is short rainfall, tank irrigation is a very good thing; but in India the rainfall varies enormously, there are large areas in Ahmadnagar district which are always drought-prone. What do we do there? But water is a sense of life, whether it is vegetable life or human or animal life.

**GS :** And even if you have water, there is greed. Look at the problems being caused now, between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

**PNH :** No, there I don't think it is a question of water resource. Land, which India possesses as national heritage — find out how we can optimally use it and for what? The first thing is food; after human beings



have food, the second thing is nutritional food, and after nutritional food you have to have water, you have to have clean air.... After that, the human body and mind start working; and even the child, as he grows, asks questions — which means education and culture. So this is a holistic approach, where one factor is linked to another — it is not an either/or situation. This either/or is a western view or Cartesian view. In India we don't have an either/or situation.

**GS :** You have mentioned that there is no escape from democracy; the fact of the matter is that even the fascist and military dictatorships of Central and South Americas have finally given way to democratic urges, (I am quoting you) and to national identities. Now democracy in India, you said, thank God, that we opted for democracy; it is the answer to the twentieth century. But really, what kind of democracy have we got? Is there any democracy in India working in terms of equal opportunities? Is there democracy in the way the electoral process works? Is there democracy in the way the parliament is functioning? How would you suggest that we could restore a meaningful functioning of the parliament? What does democracy mean any more?

**PNH :** First of all, there are two pitfalls in your questioning. In an attempt to solve some of the problem, which have arisen in our society, the process of the evolution of democracy needs to be resolved. But “one does not throw the baby out with the bath” by saying we have no democracy. In fact, India has survived because the vast masses of people of India still can express their pleasure or displeasure with our politicians periodically; and so, democracy in India has taken root in the hearts and minds of our people. That is net gain. This does not mean that our institutions like the parliament, the judiciary, executive branches, our local self-government are functioning well — obviously, they are not, and that is a great challenge. Democracy is not something as in a finished form like steel ingot; it is a process, an ongoing continuous process where we evolve institutions, maybe a gram panchayat, or a village panchayat. The parliamentarians have to play the game according to the rules of the game, not by mere shouting. You stand up and argue your case — what is called *vad vivad* is a sacred tradition in India. The great Shankara in the eighth century went all over India carrying out *vad vivad* and he was not armed with any lethal weapons. So did Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru in my own life time.

So you stand up and say what the facts are, you say where things are wrong; but instead, parliamentarians shout, they storm the well, they do not even attend sessions of parliament, causing a series of



adjournments — this is not the way to run a democracy which should be done with a sense of sanctity. Parliament and legislatures too must be regarded as temples of God. That was also perhaps what impelled Rabindranath Tagore to say that he was dreaming of an India “where the clear stream of reason is not lost in the dreary desert sand of dead habit.”

I might also add that all debates and discussions in our public life should be sustained by logic and not by mere sound magnified by the modern technology of a loudspeaker. The same thing happens with the bureaucracy also; but the bureaucracy always say they have not been trained to govern, but to carry on within a structure. Now, whether they carry on with honesty or dishonesty depends upon the moral order of a society at a given time and a given place.

**GS :** Of course, the British, in a sense, set up this bureaucracy. Do you think it is healthy the way it is set up. I am speaking about the IAS and the IPS, as among the institutions we did inherit.

**PNH :** Of course we inherited it; but today, the IAS is quite different from the old ICS, whom I have seen with my own eyes. The younger people, both men and women who come into the services, are a different generation.

Now, how do you train them? Our political leaders set an example. For instance, the great thing with Jawaharlal was that he realized India has to have a bureaucracy. He treated them with a measure of respect, even if their names were Sir Girija Shankar Bajpai, Sir B N Rao, Sir Chintaman Deshmukh. It is an interaction between the political will and the structure of the bureaucracy, the judiciary and the police, to maintain law and order. So there are systems, and it all depends how our political leaders, in whom people put faith and power, interact within the rules of the game.

**GS :** You rightly pointed out that the idea of democracy has reached the grassroots level. But whether it is going to really work, or whether we can subsume our own differences is questionable. I am absolutely in agreement with you that we do not need a pan-Indian nationalism. We want cultural diversity. Now we come to this very important document on culture called the Haksar Report. What conclusions do you draw in the Haksar Report? I learnt today that it is not a public document; so in a sense, perhaps in your own words, you could sum up the thrust of your recommendations.

**PNH :** As far as I know, the document is public. It is not a market secret; there is nothing secret about it, and a lot of people have copies of it. But it has never been subjected to discussion, serious discussion.

Culture is a means of refinement, it is called *sanskriti*. My own personal reaction, to this experience of wandering around over almost all the states in India and interacting with musicians, dancers, writers, theatre personalities and others is that culture has been an area of total neglect. What is even worse is the total disjunction between education and culture in our country, right from primary school upwards. I passionately believe education and culture should be our first priority as we enter the twenty first-century.

Then education means women also; I myself owe a great deal to my mother. I became more convinced of the role of our mothers with whom we grow for three, four years, until we start talking and walking. Education and culture are critically important in this day and age when technological globalization is taking place. A football match can be seen by millions and billions of people all over the world; but that doesn't give me any satisfaction. Yet, to hear songs, to hear interchanges between human minds and human hearts — that is culture. That I find is sadly lacking, and we in India have neglected it.

**GS :** This kind of culture — it is really ground covered at home. It may be because of the disintegration of homes, or the greater importance that is being given to schooling, that there is a lack of culture —meaning, literacy as opposed to culture.

**PNH :** No. Again this is a false dichotomy; it is not home versus school; it is home and school because even in our ancient traditions there was the concept of home and a concept of *gurukul*. Both are involved in the process; the home is involved, your mother is involved, your father is involved, your brother is involved, your sister is involved, your extended family is involved in India. Both are great places where we grow up, learn simple things, learn values-what are real values.

**GS :** Of course, there are technical reasons, practical reasons why the cultural institutions are breaking down. There is infighting, there is a lack of institutional heads as we know; but I think it is also the fact that culture is not taught at the school level.

Understanding that our values really should tell you how to live and conduct yourself, how to think, how to respond to the beauty of the world around you.

**PNH :** I agree with you, but I come back to what I said earlier — that this is an area of heartless neglect. The disjunction of education with culture right from the primary stage onwards is a source of disaster.

When society loses its cultural moorings, then it is each one for

himself and the devil take the hindmost, as they say. We witness this in our society, in some sections of our society. What saves us is very strong roots in rural India, with its oral tradition. You can go to Bihar and they would even recite some lovely poems in Bohjpuri or Maithili, and they will recite Kabir, they sing Mira *bhajans*. Something by way of what is called osmosis filters through — otherwise we would have all been at each other's throats.

**GS :** You stress the difference between the literate and the educated, and then the cultured.

**PNH :** I regard some of the products of the so-called educated as barbarians, from the cultural standpoint. You may be a brilliant computer specialist, you may be a brilliant mathematician, or even a scientist or an engineer, or a businessman or a manager — but, as a human being, what are you? There is a vacuum inside which you try to fill by something else; and culture is something which distinguishes human beings from the animal world. There is a Sanskrit saying: *sahitya, sangeeta, kala viheenah, sakshat pashu puchhya vishana hina; trinam, na khadan na cha jeeva manah, tat bhagadeyam paramam pashunam*. What distinguishes us, human beings, from the animal world is that we are sensitive to *sahitya* (literature), *sangeeta* (music), *kala* (arts), and without these, although we may not be eating grass, we are verily like animals with a human form. In the complex web of civilization woven over thousands of years, *sanskriti* or *tahsib* have been highly valued. Even the most illiterate peasant of India today carries these values through the songs of poets, saints and sufis.

There is another *sloka* which gives a more comprehensive definition of culture: *Yesham na vidya na tapo na danam; gyanam na sheelam, na guno na dharmah; Te mirtyu loke bhuvi bhara bhutah, Manushya rupena mirgasch-charan ti*.

This is very contemporary because our society is engaged more in taking than in giving. People say there is information and revolution; and I often ask them, dear friends, tell me what is the difference between information, knowledge and wisdom; or has that been obliterated by modern technology?

These verses briefly, but succinctly, define values which distinguish human beings from the animals. These values are: *vidya* (education), *tapa* (capacity to do penance), *danam* (capacity to give), *gyanam* (wisdom), *guna* (perception of quality), *sheela* (modesty), *dharma* (which is a combination of distinguishing lawful from unlawful,

right from wrong, sacred from profane). If I may say so, I am still deeply moved by the evocative words of Kabir when he wrote:

When I was born, I cried, while others expressed joy; I must so live my life that when I die, others cry and I pass away smiling.

**GS :** Thank you for insights into the quality of memory, and for speaking to us about “mindsets”.



# THE FUTURE OF HUMANITY AND HUMANISM

If my memory does not fail me, the word “humanism” was not familiar to medieval European civilization. Humanism was first introduced into the vocabulary of the western world as part of the “Renaissance” as an attempt to get away from the deadening influence of medieval scholasticism.

We are familiar with the Indian tradition where a quotation is a preferred mode of proving so that we are all being subjected to quotations from the *Puranas*, *Vedas*, *Shastras*, *Quran* and the *Bible*; and they have entered into the arena of our politics too to prove one thing or another. In Europe there was a revolt against medieval scholasticism by which people asserted the truth of a proposition by quoting from either St Paul, St Luke or St Thomas or the Old Testament. Ancient writers from the West such as Sophocles wrote not because they drew their inspiration, as it were, from a particular *sloka* or *sutra* or the *Bible*, or the Testaments, but out of inner compulsions. This became part of a cultural movement in Europe: to re-evaluate products of human creativity expressing itself in culture, in art and in antiquity. Therefore, they reviewed the classical Roman and the Greek civilizations in the light of this first expression of what they called “humanism”.

With the passage of time, there was further refinement of this word “humanism”. Yes, we accept that poetry, drama, art, architecture are admittedly an expression of creativity of human beings. As you might have read in a book by Eric Fromm, love is at the base of creativity. When I look at nature, a sunset a sunrise I want to paint; I burst into poetry like:

*Divas ka avasaan sameep tha gagan tha kuchh lohit ho chala.*

*Tarn shikha par thhee virajatee kamalani kul vallabh ki prabha<sup>1</sup>.*

This is a response of human creativity to life. In terms of the European tradition, a meaning came to be attached to it as Europeans experienced the Renaissance, the Reformation and conflicts over the religious Thirty Years War. Throughout the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Europe was engaged in wars and days of peace were very rare. Out of that interaction there arose a concern among thinking, sensitive people, in response to these conflicts of the Austro-

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Keynote Address at the Narshing Narain Memorial Seminar, delivered at the India International Centre, New Delhi on 14 March 1992.

1. A quotation from the Hindi poet Hari Oudh, freely translated as “The end of the day was near, the sky was radiant with the glow of the setting sun. And the colours were playing with the green leaves of the tree tops.”

Hungarians, the Spaniards versus the French, the barbaric tribes of Vikings in Sweden and Norway marauding all over Europe. What is all this about? Can we transcend these divides? They became aware that what is called humanity is not that which divides but that which unites. That came as a reaction to the Holy Roman Empire and, of course, in response to the Lutheran Reformation.

Luther's saying in which when he admits of no intermediaries between himself and his God is a memorable one. Apparently, Luther was not a good trader; otherwise he would have said "let there be intermediaries and each intermediary can be a Cardinal, a Bishop, a Pope, a *khalifa* maybe, who can set themselves up between God and human beings". Luther said "No, I would not tolerate any intermediaries between me and my God. I have right of access to my God. I will pray in my own way; I do not have to depend upon a Papal Dispensation." Out of this second idea arose an attempt to transcend the religious divides between Catholics and Protestants, Vandals and the Vikings; ethnic, linguistic, cultural divides, the Germans versus the French, the Swedes and Norwegians versus the others. Out of that arose an attempt to transcend and the idea came, concerning humanity as a whole. The humanist tradition is concerned with humanity as a whole.

Finally another element entered humanism. At the commencement of the industrial revolution human beings were truly blinded by the great success of science and technology. There was the brilliant *Principia Mathematica* of Newton — the fantastic Newtonian laws with so much certainty built into them. You project a particle and you can accurately measure everything about it. So great is the triumph of Newton that today the space programme is governed by Newtonian laws.

Then came the triumph of technology: of the steam engine, the generation of electricity, the relationship between electricity and magnetism, the relationship between heat, light, electricity and magnetism. Adam Smith wrote *An Enquiry into the Causes of Wealth of Nations*. I always found fault with Adam Smith by saying that if he had not been situated in Great Britain, he might have enquired into the causes of poverty of nations rather than wealth. Professional economists go wrong in merely looking at the wealth production processes, and not the poverty production in the global human condition of today. Out of this seeming triumph of science and technology, there came another concern among humanists. This third concern raised the question — what is the use of a motor car and what does it mean for human

happiness? Therefore, results of science and technology must be viewed in so far as they satisfy human needs.

It is remarkable that in Britain, the home of the industrial revolution, which took place with such fanfare — where, Newton proclaimed his laws, where a small island covered and governed and owned 40 per cent of the earth's surface, where it was so confidently felt that the British, the English specially were born to rule, where the idea developed that humanity will progress inevitably from step to step in that country in 1904, a voice was heard — the voice of a poet. His name was William Watson. His was a lone voice among the vast majority of his fellow citizens who gloried at the triumph, of the British Empire, at the triumph of the steamship, at the spinning Jenny, which replaced Dacca muslin by Manchester and Bradford cotton.

That lone voice of William Watson reflected the dilemmas and perplexities of time; of a man who was deeply in love with his country. In 1904 he published a poem titled "True Imperialism". Not the kind of imperialism which the Victorians, the great Disraelis and Gladstones were talking about. What is true imperialism?

Here, while the tide of conquest rolls  
against the distant golden shores;  
Starved and stunted human souls  
are with us more and more;  
Vain is your science, vain your arts,  
your triumphs and glories vain;  
To feed the hunger of the heart  
and the famine of the brain.  
Your savage deserts howling  
your wastes of ignorance, vice and shame.  
Is there no room for victory here?  
No feel for deeds of fame?  
Arise and conquer while ye can  
The foe that in your midst resides  
And build within the mind of Man,  
an empire that abides.

An empire that abides is the only true imperialism and not the fake imperialism which the British were boasting about. And not merely the British, they were joined by the French, the Dutch and the Portuguese.



That was in 1904. William Watson was due to become Poet Laureate. The power elite of that time were angry with him because he was questioning every assumption of their daily life. Yet it was William Watson who was eventually proved right. Everybody thought that after the Congress of Vienna, war had been abolished and except for a little trouble in South Africa and Crimea, for a hundred years from 1814 to 1914, there was no war in Europe; whereas in the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, there was no year without war. So the idea of “progress” established itself as inevitable; we are bound to make progress. Darwin's Evolution was hopefully interpreted and the Newtonian world gave us confidence and certainty. This was 1904. Ten years after that, the First World War shattered the illusion of even a man like Norman Angel who wrote a book called *The Great Illusion*. The First World War broke up the entire ethos of Victorian and Edwardian England and Europe. Doubts began to arise, uncertainty prevailed; there was a lack of confidence: am I right or am I wrong?

In 1904, humanism began asserting itself from a very different direction: through William Watson on the one hand, and through Einstein on the other, who said that matter and energy are related in a particular way. Matter can be broken into atoms, particles, and sub-particles... When you come to reach this stage of the further breaking down of matter, we cannot be as certain as Newton was in measuring things. Einstein's sense of aesthetics somehow revolted against uncertainty; but whenever he tried to say that it does not apply, it applied. So from the source of search for knowledge which is science, to the incessant search for truth and beauty, which is poetry, which is non-quantifiable.

Humanism today integrates the two sides of humanity, hunger of the heart and the famine of the brain. Without that integration, mere rationalism is arid. Similarly, atheism may be arid. You can believe there is no god, or you may believe that there is god. But merely to impose suffering on people in the name of god is not admissible within the vision of humanists. As we stand poised at the threshold of a new millenia, the third element in the history of humanism, namely, science and technology, must be viewed as to whether they promote human needs and human welfare. The most remarkable achievement of the human mind, as Chandrasekhar would say, is the search for beauty. Science has produced the atom bomb. From time immemorial, human beings have fought each other, and even religions have justified these wars. There are crusades, there are *jehads*, there are *dharmayudhas*. There are “just” wars sanctioned by the Pope and others. But what are the dimensions of a war with atomic weapons?



Humanism today has to accept the challenge of synthesizing human nature and human nurture; and ensuring that the nurture does not produce opaque minds. Opaque minds are the single source of human suffering. Look at the opacity of the mind of the Apostolic Church when confronted with the findings of Galelio. He says, "It is not so."

Generally people do not know why Gautama, Prince Siddhartha, one day abandoned his wife, child and his palace. He did it to find the means to alleviate the suffering of humanity. He belonged to the Shaka tribe, and he joined the Shaka *Sangha*. While joining this *Sangha*, the young Prince Siddhartha took a vow that he would obey the decisions of the *Sangha*. Now this Shaka kingdom had a neighbouring kingdom of Koili, with a river called Rohini which flowed between them. Annually they would have a fight over the distribution of Rohini water between the Shakas and the Koilis. One day the *Senapati*, the Commander-in-Chief, called a meeting of the Shaka *Sangha* and said we must declare war and get over this annual quarrel with our neighbouring kingdom. Everybody voted with the *Senapati* except one lone voice — Prince Siddhartha, who said that he could not agree; and his argument holds valid in the world of today. He said, "Yes, this is a bit of a nuisance; but a war would create a permanent enemy."

In India we did not have any movement akin to the Renaissance or the Reformation as in the Judaeo Christian traditions. Here there have been a series of movements for "renaissance" and also, a series of reformations. Here we did not conceive of what might be described as monotheism, but instead religions which fostered pantheism. Here there was a synthesis between Islam and what is called Sanatana Dharma; which produced the Bhakti movement spreading all over the North and South. There was also the debate between Shaivites and Vaishnavaites. The best definition of humanism is in Gandhiji's love for one song which used to be sung in his prayer meetings. I heard it myself several times in his prayer meetings:

*Vaishnav jana to tene kahiye*

*jo pir paraee jane re*

(Call only that man a true Vaishnav who is sensitive to the pain of others)

Sensitiveness to other people's suffering is the quintessential element of humanism. So, we have to integrate the spirit of enquiry, of scientific temper with that which is held sacred. In early civilization human beings when confronted with the phenomenon of nature and society, asked, who is behind it? And even about the self, they asked, *Ko Aham*. "Who am I"? The answer used to be, if there is thunder and

lightning, there is Indradeva who is the causal factor. But now, people asked “not, who, but how and why”. Why thunder and lightning, how is it produced? What is static electricity? What is light? What is sound?

In my childhood I used to be very afraid of thunder. In Madhya Pradesh, where I lived in my childhood, thunder was thunderous. When I learnt through science that if you have seen lightning, the sound takes a long time — lightning comes first and if lightning has not struck you, do not be afraid of thunder.

The twentieth century has seen remarkable exponential growth of knowledge in the sciences: in material sciences, in biological sciences, in bio-technology, biophysics, biochemistry — in all fields of knowledge. We have also witnessed the vast turbulence of human beings in this century in India. There is constant strife — as a product of the awakening of human beings asking questions “Why am I poor, why am I deprived, why is my identity not respected. Why cannot I give expression to my thoughts and feelings? Is it an inevitable part of god's will or is it a creation of human beings?”

No society can be durable in this day and age which does not satisfy the hungers, both of the body and mind. Heart, body and mind. That is why a cultural renaissance in India is so very essential — not the culture of Maggi noodles, but the culture of music, of dance, of drama, of painting which makes life beautiful. After all, what is our heritage? We do not point to the various kings and queens and tombs and so on. We point to our music, our dance, our architecture, things produced by our hands, our cloth, our tapestry, our design, our pottery and our art.

I am one of the great admirers of the American people and their spirit. But that country, despite all its riches, is sadder than many. Why? Because, somewhere deep down, western civilization committed an error; and we are repeating that error — that ever-increasing satisfaction of material appetites. Yet there was this poet who said, “Vain is your science, vain your arts, your triumphs and glories, vain to feed the hunger of heart and famine of brain”. *Manavata, insaniat* is part of our heritage. But how do you interpret that heritage? It is also part of our heritage that we divided our society into *brahmins*, *kshatriyas*, *vaishyas* and *shudras*. Manu the Great assigned to each a fixed place in the universe of human existence, including a fixed place to our mothers, our sisters, our wives the one half of humankind. It is not a question of mankind; it is a question of humankind. The twenty-first century can have no future unless the other half of humankind who bring us to life, who nurture us and care for us are equally part of the creative processes of

society. There can be no humanism which does not embrace within its ken the terrible dilemma and perplexity of the other half of humanity — the woman.

The time has come for deep and serious thinking. There are no quick fixes. Even a simple thing like satisfaction of human needs is easier said than done. Every plan says we are devoting thousands of crores for human needs. Human needs now also include having a telephone in your flat. But what do you do with the telephone, when you do not know what to convey? You have information technology and we are carried away by that. I would ask, what is the relationship between information, knowledge and wisdom?

The time has come for us to give up what are called mindsets. Keep the mind open, let it always be receptive, let it always question, let it never accept the proclaimed truth by our leaders, whoever they might be, either religious, temporal or spiritual. Without such questioning there can be no renaissance of our India, and no reformation. There will be violence as we see it everyday. There will be no compassion, there will be cruelty. There will be no love, there will be hate. With the atom bomb hovering over us and even science providing ways of massive destruction through biological warfare, chemical warfare and the raping of the earth that we are doing every day.

You might as well write an epitaph on humanism rather than an epic on humanism; but I am sure we will write an epic on humanism. Our country is capable of not only finding its own salvation, but having a message for the contemporary tortured world. That message is contained in a single word. That word is “pluralism”. There is no time for me to elaborate on this theme, but it essentially means respecting each human identity and yet transcending it. It is because pluralism has constituted a centre, a cornerstone of our ancient civilization that we have survived, as Iqbal put it, the ravages of time. Let us ponder over it.





Hon'ble Dr Sanjeeva Reddy releasing the first issue of *Man & Development*. On his right is Shri T N Kaul, Chairman, Editorial Board of *Man & Development*, and left is Shri Rashpal Malhotra, Founder-Director, CRRID. Shri P N Haksar was editor of this journal till his last breath.

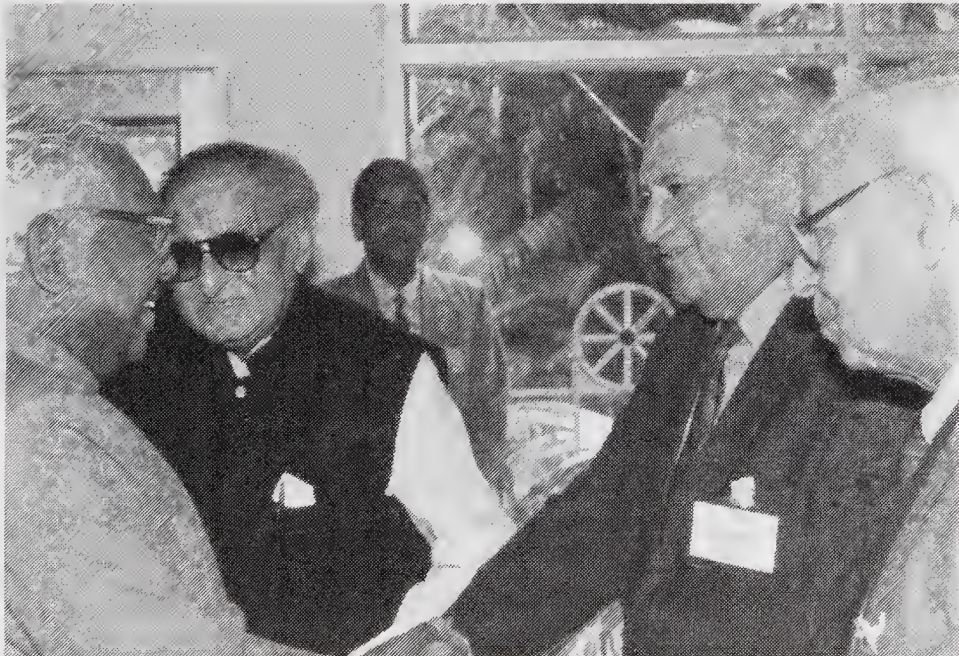


His Excellency Dr Julius K Nyerere, President of Tanzania, during his visit to CRRID. On his right are Shri P N Haksar and Shri T N Kaul.





Shri P N Haksar opening the first phase of the campus of CRRID. On his right is Shri K Banerjee, Administrator, Union Territory Chandigarh.



Hon'ble Dr K R Narayanan, being received by Shri P N Haksar and Keshub Mahindra during his visit to CRRID.





Dr Manmohan Singh addressing the participants at the International Conference on "Co-operative Development and Peace in Asia". On his left is Shri P N Haksar.



Hon'ble Dr K R Narayanan, addressing the participants at the International Conference on "Co-operative Development and Peace in Asia". On his left is Shri P N Haksar and right is Shri Rashpal Malhotra.

## Letters





# 1. To Mrs Indira Gandhi<sup>1</sup>

13 February 1966

My dear Induji,

We returned to London on 10 August 1965. A whole decade had gone by — a fairly long segment of time. I have served many masters. And so, one more would not matter. Indeed, I wondered how I missed serving under Chagla. I could then have really boasted about having served under all the High Commissioners appointed up to date in London since our country's independence. Anyhow, the thing which worried me when I travelled to London from Vienna was our relationship with Britain. In Nigeria, I became conscious, for the first time, with the one-sidedness of that relationship. I also noticed for the first time how mean and unscrupulous could a Britisher be. And I was intensely unhappy coming here. There was, however, no escape from facing the problem of finding some rational basis of our relationship with this country.

I have, of course, never believed in the elaborate mythology built up about our post-independence relationship with Britain. But between 1947 to almost the time when Khrushchev and, later, Kennedy came to power, the myth served a useful purpose. Indo-British relations and, more particularly, our becoming part of the Commonwealth saved us from the cold war blizzard when it was blowing really fast and fierce. Britain too derived political and economic benefits and used us in withstanding some of the grosser pressures on her. But the habit of using us and our allowing ourselves to be so used created certain dangerous assumptions in this country. And one of the assumptions was that India could be managed and handled through a variety of British connections in India; that assumption even though weakened still persists. And it persists because it constantly receives a fresh lease of life whenever our civil servants retired or otherwise and peripatetic diplomats come here and give firm assurances of our undying faith in Britain and our gratitude to her.

Without going into a detailed analysis of Britain's policies in relation to our subcontinent, one need only state the conclusions: Firstly, we have to safeguard ourselves from a purely negative anti-British attitude compounded of anger and frustration; I am afraid Dr Jivaraj has fallen for this in a big way. Secondly, we have to develop direct

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<sup>1</sup>P N Haksar collection, N.M.M.L

relationship with USA as we have developed with USSR, provided we can do this without getting bogged down in a morass of professional and romantic pro-Americanism. Any improvement of our direct relationship with USA would go a long way towards correcting the one-sidedness in our relations with Britain, especially if our relations with USSR continue to grow normally.

I do not know how far I am right in my analysis and approach. If it is right, certain things would appear to flow from it: Firstly, we simply must now stop rushing to this country; secondly, we must maintain over a long period of time an attitude of correct and dignified cordiality; thirdly we must continue to press for a revision of British policies in the subcontinent which have had the effect of precipitating the recent conflict between Pakistan and India. Britain simply must take up an attitude of strict impartiality between our two countries. This is the minimum we should try to achieve.

In this view of the matter I would not suggest our Prime Minister visiting this country even if invited. After all, a visit of Prime Minister of India to Britain is a political event. That is how, at any rate, everybody sees it. It must have some purpose. It must have some significance. It must correspond to some need of ours. It must at least reflect some urges of our people. Howsoever, we may view the visit, if we wish Britain in general and Harold Wilson in particular to stop taking us for granted, it would not be right for our Prime Minister to visit Britain with no evident purpose beyond that of a Commonwealth Prime Minister visiting the mother country after assumption of office. This does not mean that we should be nasty or angry or discourteous. Far from it. But we should be firm, cordial, dignified and correct over a long period of time. Apart from this, the visit to the United States must, for the first time, stand by itself. It should not be linked with a visit to Britain. And, after some time, I presume, our prime Minister would visit the USSR. Therefore, visits could be arranged to other countries. The magnitude of our problems at home and the need to give them continuous and close attention provide sufficient justifications in themselves for our Prime Minister to remain in India, specially when parliament is in session.

P N Haksar

4 March 1966

My dear Induji,

Thank you for your letter of 21 February and your earlier one of the same date.

I do not think that it would be necessary or even desirable to overfly England. That would be, I am afraid, interpreted as an insult. Nothing would be gained by our hurting national pride and outraging national dignity.

We still need this country's friendship, as, indeed, she needs ours. And we both have to work out a proper balance in our relationship consistent with our interests, our dignity and our self-respect.

It is comparatively easy to elaborate the broad principles governing Indo-British relations. It is rather more difficult to translate those principles into day-to-day practice. These difficulties arise largely because our administrative machinery as well as those who man it are committed to ensuring continuity. One can, of course, bring about change. And, indeed, one must. Lord Curzon once said that "epochs arise in the history of every country when the administrative machinery requires to be taken to pieces and overhauled and readjusted to the altered necessities or the growing demands of the hour."

If re-fashioning of our relations with Britain is full of difficulties, our attempt to create new foundations for our relations with the United States is no less difficult. I have, however, a feeling of assurance that you can make a new beginning. The United States too is vastly different today from what it was 10 years ago. There is great ferment there. This will grow unless it is smothered by some cataclysmic consolidation of reactionary forces in that country.

It is interesting to observe that LBJ likes to trace his political descent from Roosevelt. In Roosevelt's days, US was regarded throughout the length and breadth of our country with affection and esteem. And that was because his name got intimately linked with our national aspirations. We got no aid in those days, there was no PL 480. What is the insuperable obstacle to re-creating a nexus between our national aspirations and American political and security interests?

I devoutly and earnestly hope that your visit will provide an opportunity for a review in a fundamental way of relations between our two countries. We shall put ourselves in a weak negotiating position if we were to confine our dialogue with the Americans to our current relations. Viewed only in that context of our present-day relations, our dependence on the United States would loom large. But if we change the context and

review the tortuous course of relations between our two countries during the last 19 years, we would be able to build a better case for ourselves. And since the greatest damage was inflicted upon us during the Dulles's period, our critical review of the past would not involve either the present Democratic Administration or the present president whose deep concern for human welfare should enable him to comprehend our problems and our difficulties.

The crucial question for us is: Can the United States evolve a new policy vis-a-vis India and Pakistan; can the United States also accept the proposition that the greatest contribution India can make towards peace and stability of the world is to continue to function as a self-respecting Democratic State to which her own people give unswerving allegiance? And this allegiance can only be secured in the measure we are able to truly reflect our national aspirations for dignity, bread and liberty.

Kennedy showed acute insight when he once said, "It is not enough merely to provide sufficient money. Equally important are our attitude and understanding. ... Let us remember that our nation also during the period of its formative growth adopted a policy of non-involvement with great international controversies of the nineteenth Century."

I am sorry I have strayed far from what I set out to write in this letter.

Please do not worry about the boys. I know the pointlessness of such an exhortation. My main difficulty has been the lack of any sort of relationship with them. I have now established some sort of personal friendship with Rajiv. He now comes and sits and talks of mice and men. But with Sanjay I have not even begun. Urmila and I are planning to visit him soon. I have also written to him. I would want him to feel that we are interested in him as a person and not merely because of our friendship with the parents.

My own first reactions to his wanting to change are adverse. I feel that he must complete the course. I, of course, do not know what led him to Crewe. Was it his own choice? Was he really interested?

Rajiv is a fine boy. He is, however, still groping, not quite certain what he would really like to do. He appears to be endowed with more than ordinary artistic sensibility. He reacts to colour and design and shapes and forms. He was planning to go home during Easter Vacations. I suppose he must have written to you about it.

P N Haksar



## 2. To Dr Murli Manohar Joshi<sup>1</sup>

3 June 1998

Dear Dr Murli Manohar Joshi:

In a few months time, I shall attain the age of 85. However, Human Spirit or, if you like, human soul, is indestructible. As Bhagawat Gita puts it: Human spirit cannot be pierced by sword; it cannot be destroyed by fire; It cannot be dried up by hot winds. So, a bit of that spirit survives within me even though, like Dhritarashtra, I am without eyesight. However, I recall our one and only one meeting which took place way back in 1981 in one small corner of Connaught Place. My late uncle, Pt. Rajinder Narain Haksar, was witness. He is of course no more. And, I too am not well. However, I am under some compulsion to write to you to invite your attention to a report I submitted to the Government of India way back in 1991. I had the honour of being the Chairman of a High Powered Committee. That report is the product of my two years of travelling in our country in the course of which I penetrated into every nook and corner of it and interacted with thousands of creative people. The Chapter II of the report was written by me exclusively, but my colleagues in the Committee accepted it. That chapter was inspired by "pluralistic humanism" which in my humble opinion constitute the cornerstone of our ancient civilization. It also embodies the spirit contained in two separate Sanskrit verses which I would have liked to write in my own hands if I had the eye sight. One of these verses says that "human beings who are insensitive to *sahitya*, *sangeeta* and *kala* are animals even if they do not have "tails and horns". Another verse says that "human beings who have no curiosity to acquire knowledge; who have no capacity to give; who have no capacity to do *tapa* ; who have no capacity to recognize quality, constitute a burden on this earth of ours and though they look like human beings, they are animals".

In the English language, the word "culture" is derivative of the word "agriculture". That is why they have words like "cultured pearls", "horticulture", "floriculture", "pisciculture" etc., etc. In our country, 'culture' is derived from a word, viz., *Sanskriti* which means refinement. I have been a passionate advocate that our entire educational system, from primary level right upto university has been completely drained of refinement both In terms of values as well as sensitiveness to creative arts.

I devoutly hope and pray that you will do me the honour of at least

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<sup>1</sup>Courtesy: Dr M M Joshi, Minister, HRD, Government of India, New Delhi.

going through the report yourself. I have never sought anything from any government nor would I seek anything now. I did not even accept the Padma Vibhushan Award which was sought to be given to me way back in 1972. However, we need to deeply ponder over the English word, viz., "pluralism". Bharat, Hind, Hindustan or India cannot survive without pluralism. We cannot weave pluralism into the fabric of our civilization of today and tomorrow without tolerance and morality.

I apologize for inflicting this letter on you. However, I take this opportunity to convey to you my blessings and best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

P N Haksar

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5 August 1998

Dear Dr Murli Manohar Joshi:

It is, indeed, very kind and gracious of you to invite me to a dinner on 9 August at Ashoka Hotel. I would have very much liked to be present as the dinner would be one of the functions marking the conclusion of our country's Golden Jubilee year of Independence. My inability to attend the dinner arises from the circumstance that a variety of medical specialists who were torturing me with all-kinds of tests have discovered that I have a malignant growth in my right kidney. All my energies and will power are at present entirely consumed by my efforts to cope with my illness. I am writing all this to you for your personal information.

I hope and pray that in the next 50 years our country, viz. Bharat, Hind or Hindustan or India will become a shining example to the distracted world of today of how we have succeeded in combining pluralism with humanism. This of course we cannot do unless we passionately dedicate ourselves to combining *shiksha* with *sanskriti* as the cornerstone of the process of India's renaissance. Philosophical mindset rooted in economic, scientific and technological determinism will have to give way to a balanced relativity.

Please do forgive my trespasses.

With my warmest regards and very best wishes to you,

Yours sincerely,

P N Haksar

### 3. To Shri Hari Jaisingh<sup>1</sup>

8 July 1997

My dear Hari:

It was very lovely to see you the other day on the occasion of the release of Prem Bhatia's book by the Prime Minister.

I still do not know how to respond to your very kind and gracious request to me that I should write something for the *Tribune* on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of our country's Independence. In your first letter you had asked me to contemplate the nagging question: What went wrong? In a simplistic way, my response would be that lot of things went wrong and a lot of things went right, but it is rather difficult to present an authenticated and audited balance sheet within the framework of 50 years which is a mere speck when measured against the time-scale of the history of Indian civilization. It is for the first time in that history that we are trying to build a Nation-State. Neither of these two words which I have underlined have equivalent in any Indian language. We also have no word in any Indian language for the English word, viz., "politician". I am old enough to remember that nobody described Gandhi, Nehru, Lala Lajpat Rai, Maulana Azad, Sardar Patel, C R Das, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and others as "politicians".

To divert your mind away from pressing me to write, I am sending you a copy of the Maulana Azad Memorial Lecture which I delivered in January this year. The *Tribune* carried a brief account of it and you were driven to write an editorial on two words I had used, namely, "mental pollution".

Please do tell me what do I do.

I wonder, if you have been able to get from Rashpal the two books I had mentioned to you in my previous letter.

With lots of love and blessings,

Yours affectionately,

P N Haksar

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<sup>1</sup>Courtesy: Hari Jaisingh, Editor, The Tribune, Chandigarh.

31 July 1997

Dearest Hari:

I was moved to tears by your letter of 28 July. The tears did not come out as an expression of "divine despair". They were in response to your love. There is nothing more precious which one human being can give to another than *prem*.

I do really want to write something. However, at the moment I really do not know what I could write. Perhaps the state of my mind is induced by the state of my body. For the past two weeks I have been continuously subjected to the torture of undergoing all kinds of medical tests, including CT scan, etc. I have with me "something I wrote a long time ago which has not been published. The title of what I wrote is "An Approach to Culture". But it is a very long piece and would be about 15 printed pages of a book. I have always regarded "economics" as a melancholy social science. I once asked a very very distinguished economist, who was my colleague in the Planning Commission, of which I was the Deputy Chairman, if he "loved his wife". He was a bit surprised at my question and ultimately said: "Yes, of course I love Lalita" (that was the name of his wife). I asked him to express this love in economic terms or even in econometric term. The name of the person was Sukhamoy Chakravarty, who was internationally known as India's leading mathematical economist. After all, love, compassion, equity, tolerance, morality, etc., are non-quantifiable !!

I am also obsessed by words like Bharat, Hindustan, Al-Hind and India. However, I still have a deep faith in the capacity of our country surviving the ravages of Time as well as resist the pollution of our minds, which is being insiduously polluted through the so-called revolution in information technology. What concerns me even more is our total failure to inculcate in our educational system the abiding values of our civilization and culture. Look at the behaviour pattern of the overwhelming mass of our MPs and MLAs who storm the well of the house, tear up papers, do dharnas, etc. They do not seem to realize that the strength of one's argument should not depend upon the loudness of voice, but the logic, reason and sanctity of facts. In my own life time I have had the privilege of hearing all the leading lights of Indian national movement. All of them spoke softly though there were deep passion behind their words.

Of course we have another difficult problem. We are for the first time in the history of our civilization building institutions like state, judiciary, bureaucracy, industry run by machines, etc. etc. The



conceptual framework within which all this is being done cannot be adequately expressed in any of our Indian languages. That is why we make a mockery of the word secular state by inventing a word like "secularism" as a sort of ideology. We have no word in any of the Indian Languages for "State". The formation of nation-states is a comparatively recent phenomenon in human history. There was no Germany until 1871. Italy as a nation-state also emerged in nineteenth century. France as a State emerged only in 1789 and even then, they were beleaguered and besieged by Napoleonic ambitions.

I am sorry to inflict all this on you, but I have an urge to have some sort of conversation with you.

With affectionate regards,

Yours affectionately,

P N Haksar

PS: Since 15 August 1997 is merely the day of commencement of an year-long Golden Jubilee celebrations, perhaps I could write something or the other in the course of the coming year provided I have your approval.

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19 December 1997

My dear Hariji:

There was some English poet who used the words "jaded calendar". He also described the contemporary culture as "diabetic" which was, according to him, "rotting the nerve of life and literature". As I suffer from a chronic state of cheerfulness, I look forward to the year 1998 without feeling jaded. Your New Year card added to my cheerfulness. Many, many thanks for it. May I, on my part, wish you and yours, with all my heart, all the very best not only in the year 1998 but in the next millennia.

With affectionate, regards,

Yours affectionately,

P N Haksar

6 March 1998

My dear Hari:

That single sentence which you wrote in your own hand in the letter addressed to D L Shah Trust has provoked me to write this letter to you. What made you feel a sense of gratitude that I "remember you"? I belong to a species which is not totally extinct to whom the word "friendship" is something sacred. And, you have given me a precious gift of friendship which, according to me, does not alter when it alteration finds.

I hope that you will be able to find some little time to go through the book which was first published way back in 1982. It would be a tremendous gift if you could let me have your critical comments.

I hope that there will be an occasion for us to meet in the year 1998.

With my affectionate regards,

Yours affectionately,  
P N Haksar

## 4. To Ms Patsy Pillai<sup>1</sup>

12 October 1990

Patsy, dear:

Your letter of 23 July has remained unanswered. How am I to explain to you the reason for my long silence ! One of the reasons, at any rate, is in the last sentence of your letter in which you have conveyed "lots of love to you and Urmila".<sup>2</sup>

Urmila is no more. On 29 November 1989, she, as it were, closed her eyes and stopped breathing. Since then, I have been in a totally unfamiliar state of mind and heart which I cannot describe. And though I had exhorted others that Time heals, I found those exhortations to be very cruel. There is an element of self pity and even, perhaps, selfishness because she was, literally my "eyes" ever since I lost my central vision some six years ago. Anyhow, I have said enough to give you some sort of explanation for the time I have taken to respond to your very very lovely letter. I read through it several times over and my mind went back to the years when I had the pleasure and the privilege of having you work with me in the High Commission in London. All those remembrances of things past came back to me.

I do not know whether you have read a book by Hawkins with his intriguing title of *A Short History of Time*. In that book he describes a situation: A cup is broken. Its pieces fall and a film records the breaking of the cup and the falling of the pieces. If you play this film backward, you can actually see the falling pieces fly back and forming a cup. Your letter had this effect of falling bits and pieces of memory rushing back in defiance of laws of gravity to form a cup. You had once narrated to me the story of how you and Vella got married and how the apartheid laws forced you to live apart. It all came back to me. Despite all the messages of Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed and Marx, human beings, either as individuals or as aggregates, living in society, have not yet learnt to so balance their individual and societal existence that there is a credit balance in favour of love, compassion, tolerance, altruism etc., etc.

You can see how your letter has triggered off all kinds of random thoughts and feelings. I was particularly delighted to learn that you liked the description of a bit of me in Vol. I of *One more Life*. Please do believe

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<sup>1</sup>Courtesy: Patsy Pillay, Assistant to P N Haksar, High Commission London.

<sup>2</sup>Urmilla Haksar, wife of Shri P N Haksar.

me when I say that your brief but perceptive comments encourage me to persist with the idea of completing Vol. II. Bits and pieces of it I have written, but I still have to find the time and that degree of tranquility within me to put the bits and pieces together to form the broken cup.

It was very very lovely of you to offer help. How I wish you could do that, but it must remain in the realm of a beautiful idea.

I was glad to learn what your children are doing and where they are. Certainly, it would be wonderful if Anand could visit us in Delhi when he comes to Calcutta sometime towards the end of the Year.

In a few days time, Nelson Mandela would be in our midst. I still cannot make up my mind whether his release was "tactical". He certainly is cast in the image of a Messiah. But not all Messiahs escape crucifixion.

Please do write whenever you have the time and the inner urge to do so. I would always look forward to hearing from you. In the meantime, I send you and Vella<sup>1</sup> my love and, if I may say so, my blessings.

Yours affectionately,  
P N Haksar

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18 August 1992

Patsy, dear:

It was lovely to have your letter. Thanks a million for the cassettes. By now I have heard it several times over. The voice is so soothing!

I hope Vella has got over the heart bypass. While I have no personal experience of it, I find many of my friends who have gone through this surgery doing very well indeed.

Sitting at this distance, I try to follow the goings on in the world. You are absolutely right. In the short run, it is the opaque mindsets of the white minority which will decide whether the inexorable process of liberation of millions upon millions of human beings who happen to be black will go through without a bloodbath. The idea that a small enclave

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<sup>1</sup>Professor Vella Pillai, a friend of P N Haksar.



of state called Israel should be carved out as a citadel for the whites is very attractive.

I have coined a new phrase. It is called "Pluralistic Humanism". Peace, tranquility, co-operation and tolerance in the emerging world would depend whether, through educational or other processes, human beings come round to accept the imperatives of "Pluralistic Humanism".

I owe you an explanation for taking so long to respond to your letter of 14 July. I have been in the midst of having my house repaired extensively and decorated. This took a lot out of me. It took nearly five months to complete the job.

I have had no communication or news from Arthur and Audrey<sup>1</sup>. I hope they are well. Please do telephone them on my behalf and lodge my complaint.

With lots and lots of love to you and Vella,

Yours affectionately,

P N Haksar

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17 November 1995

Dearest Patsy:

Your letter of 29 July moved me deeply. The only way I can express my feelings is by sending you, Vella, Anand and his family my heartfelt blessings.

I could not write to you earlier because soon after Arthur passed away, another friend of mine in India, G Parthasarathy, who was very dear to me, passed away on 1 August. And then, on 10 October, another friend of mine in London, whom you probably do not know, but who was a great artist passed away. I had known Hari Baines<sup>2</sup> and his wife Pauline for almost half a century. Despite the fact that one knows that "death cometh sooner or late" when it does come, and includes dear and near ones, one falls into a state of depression and helplessness. And, when one contemplates the world around us. I find, very little in it which cheers me up. I for one cannot be inspired to write a poem about the great advances made by humanity in the area of technology. However, ending

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<sup>1</sup>Audrey Gavshon & Arthur Gavshon, English friends of P N Haksar in London.

<sup>2</sup>Hari Baines, a famous painter and great friend of P N Haksar.

apartheid is certainly a great historical event. In many ways it is a personal triumph of Nelson Mandela's moral courage. I devoutly hope and pray that he does not meet the same fate as Gandhi did.

I entirely agree with you that it is not on true economics alone that the beautiful concept of non-racial South Africa will triumph. It will triumph only if some day all gather together and apologize publicly for the wrongs of the past and hold white hands and black hands in an unbreakable chain leading towards the future and inspired by love, compassion and justice. I hope you will say: Amen!

I wonder if Vella could find some little time to write an article for the quarterly journal titled *Man & Development* which I have been editing for the last 15 years. If my memory does not fail me, I had sent you an off-print of an editorial I wrote when Nelson Mandela was "crowned".

You have "dared" to ask me about Vol. II. I am afraid, it has neither been completed nor has it taken any final shape. It is all due to the fact that I find myself most of the time in a state of distraction. The daily routine of life which includes my duties and responsibilities of a housewife also prevent me from engaging in recalling the past with fair amount of detachment and truth.

I was glad to hear that Vella will be periodically visiting South Africa as a Visiting Professor. You are obviously not thinking of migrating back to your homeland.

I telephoned Audrey three times in this month and I only heard her recorded voice. I wonder whether she has gone away to get her mind diverted from contemplating images of her life with Arthur at 19 Stormont Road.

Please do write whenever you have time to do so and also put pressure on Vella to write an analytical article on the future prospects of South Africa.

With lots of love and blessings to you all,

Yours affectionately,

P N Haksar

29 December 1995

Dearest Patsy:

As the saying goes, hope rises eternally in human breast and it is vastly strengthened by love of dear ones like you. It was a wonderful gift that you sent me. It is poetry which is keeping you going. Although I was brought up on science, I still feel that poets have a kind of sensitivity which makes them see and discover the dark secrets about human condition on this earth.

I have had no news of Audrey. Whenever I have telephoned her, I have been confronted with her recorded voice. I am just wondering whether she has gone away somewhere in an attempt to escape from 19 Stormont Road.

You once wrote to me saying that Vella is involved in some sort of economic planning for South Africa. I wonder if you and I could persuade him to write an article for publication in a quarterly journal which I edit in India, titled *Man & Development*. I still have dark forebodings about South Africa. I read a news item the other day about the Zulus attacking a settlement somewhere which had ANC supporters. I also wonder how land which has been taken away from Africans during the last two centuries will be restored back to them. Also, what is the development strategy so that the Africans can sustain themselves with the hope that they will have food, education, health and housing? Do you think that the wealthy in South Africa will make the necessary sacrifices to sustain a development strategy within the framework of genuine democracy?

You had once enquired about my subsequent volumes of autobiography. I deeply regret to inform you that I have not made much progress. I am trying to work up a great deal of determination within myself that by the time the year 1996 ends, I would relieve myself of this great burden of telling the story of *One More Life*.

By the time this letter reaches you the year 1996 would have already begun. May I send you and Vella my love and very best wishes not only for your health and happiness, but also for a deep sense of fulfilment in life.

With lots of love to you both,

Yours affectionately,

P N Haksar

12 February 1997

Dearest Patsy:

I am still reeling under the impact of your letter of 25 January. I wish I had your telephone number. Please do let me have it when you write to me next.

I hope that the malignancy was discovered at its early stage. I know of at least four cases in Delhi who are victims of this foul disease and are living normal life even after 15 years of surgery. However, I do know the trauma one experiences when the first diagnosis takes place.

I telephoned Audrey once in October and again in November. In the month of October, she was apparently away in South Africa because of her mother's death. There was, however, someone in the house who took my call. I wrote to Audrey, but I have had no response. Perhaps she is still away.

I can just imagine the stresses and strains with which you and the entire family have gone through. I hope that you are being looked after not only by a competent medical person, but a sensitive one. Knowing you as I do, I have no doubt that you will brave it all.

Nelson Mandela's letter is both sensitive and humane. Exercise of power has not had its corrosive effect. Recently I had pleasure of meeting the Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa, His Excellency Mr Thabo Mbeki. I found him a really wonderful man with no trace whatsoever of ego. I wonder if you know him. I am hoping and praying that the Zulus and their leadership will respond to the noble gesture made by Dr Nelson Mandela by making Bouthlese the Acting President.

I am enclosing for your amusement a piece I wrote which might give you some idea of my old-age concerns.

With lots of love and blessings to you all,

Yours affectionately,

P N Haksar



## 5. To Shri Govind Narain<sup>1</sup>

17 January 1973

Dear Govind,

You spoke to me over the RAX yesterday morning and asked me, with a rare sense of delicacy, if I would accept the Award of Padma Vibhushan for the Republic Day of 1973. You said that it was PM's desire that I should do so. You were good enough to give me some time to think it over. And this I have done. May I, first of all, say that the very thought that I should be given an award is by itself a great reward for whatever services I might have rendered as a public servant. I am grateful for this to PM. However, I have a difficulty in accepting the award: All these years, I have often said to myself that one should work so that one can live with oneself without regret. This gave me a measure of inner tranquility and even courage. Accepting an award for work done somehow causes an inexplicable discomfort to me. I hope I will not be misunderstood. I repeat I am grateful for the thought that my services should be recognized. For me this is enough. I would beg of you not to press me to accept the award itself. I shall be grateful if you will kindly convey to PM my deep and abiding gratitude for the privilege I had to serve under her.

With regards,



Yours sincerely,  
P N Haksar

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<sup>1</sup>Courtesy: Shri Govind Narain, ICS, Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs' Government of India, New Delhi.

## 6. To Professor Vjiay Rao<sup>1</sup>

17 May 1995

My dear Vijay:

I did receive your registered letter. I have also received your letter of 10 May. With the passage of each year, distance between me and the Government of India as well as those who inhabit the world of politics as well as democracy, goes on increasing. I suppose this phenomenon is due to the fact that I have not undergone the treatment by you for developing human dynamics within myself. I live in a small world of my own fancies, imagination as well as hopes and despair.

Be that as it may, I did speak about the contents of your letter to someone in the Ministry and he promised me that he will bring the matter to the attention of the Minister. Whether he did this or not, I do not know.

You have sought my advice about "human dynamics". This is curious because you are my Guru on this subject. However, I hope that you have developed this science free from what used to be called "brainwash". I am given to raise this question because among the qualities which you inculcate, you have mentioned the word "Killer instinct". Frankly, my obsessive pre-occupation with words like "pluralistic humanism" makes me react adversely to development of such instincts. If millions of Indians join the Indian armed forces, knowing that they may have to die for their country, it is, from my point of view, more desirable. In my young days I committed to memory a verse in Hindi which can be roughly translated into English in the following words:

I do not want to go to heaven, Lear Mother India, give me this *vardan*. That I should ever remain deeply dedicated to my motherland.

I must confess that I am oldfashioned and do not respond to the great magic of "killer instinct" or even to words like "competition". I also respond to attaining "excellence" implicit in which is sensitiveness to love and beauty. Our national moto is, as you know, *Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram*.

Enough of this nonsense. I trust you and the family are well. Give them my blessings. Do also convey to Professor Karad my love and blessings. I trust that MIT is ever striving towards excellence.

With love and blessings,

Yours affectionately,

P N Haksar

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<sup>1</sup>Courtesy: Vijay S Rao, Professor at MIT, Pune.

## 7. To Professor Vishwanath Karad<sup>1</sup>

6 August 1998

My dear Vishwanath:

Pandeji had delivered to me by hand your very warm and gracious letter of 3 July in which you had extended to me an invitation to participate in the World Philosophers Meet, 98 to be held in Geneva from 18 August to 21 August 1998. When you and Vijay visited me in connection with the proposed conference, I had vaguely mentioned to you about the problem I am having with my health. In fact, almost the entire month of July was spent by me in undergoing large number of medical tests. I had also to spend a full week in a hospital, I am now under treatment which is called Hormone therapy for my malignant growth in my right kidney. In this circumstance, I do not see how I could possibly join you in Geneva. Even if I somehow withstand the air journey, I cannot see myself standing up on the platform of the conference and speaking extempore on the rather complex set of problems involving interaction between Philosophy, Religion and Science.

The power elite groups around the world have no interest whatsoever in the subject matter of the conference. However, they do command material resources and use the highly sophisticated systems produced by the revolution in information technology by carrying on sustained campaign of brain washing. Philosophy, religion and science are all being prostituted for serving their narrowly defined Interests.

As I write this letter, a sentence uttered by the first Director General of UNESCO, namely, Julian Huxley, comes to my mind. In his Valedictory address he called upon science to give to human kind a "true religion". The exponential growth of science and its wide and varied applications is producing large number of moral dilemmas, e.g., how to save the succeeding generations from the scourge of war when the arsenals are saturated with nuclear, biological and chemical weapons with their delivery systems; the second and even more acute dilemma is presented by cloning, especially of human beings.

Please do forgive my trespass on your time. I devoutly hope and pray that the conference in Geneva will come to grips with the problems to save the rich diversity of Homo sapiens and their habitat on this earth.

With lots of love and blessings,

Yours affectionately,

P N Haksar

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<sup>1</sup>Courtesy: Dr Vishwanath D Karad, Director MIT, Pune.

## 8. To Shri Subrata Banerjee<sup>1</sup>

18 December 1993

My dear Subrata:

I have your letter of 3 December. I devoutly hope and pray that the final results of your check up are reassuring.

My own state of health has its ups and downs, depending upon the variability of the external environment.

The election results have caused me no surprise. It has, in fact, confirmed my own perception of India's social, cultural and historical reality. In this wide world, we are the only inheritors of a civilization which is truly pluralistic. And, this reality keeps mocking at the attempts made to contain this pluralism within the framework of Marxist monism or Hindu, Muslim or Sikh monism.

There is also the decline of the Congress Party. The space which is vacated by it in the hearts and minds of the people is filled by others, until we discover that these "others" are no better. Naturally, the expression of this varies with the specificities of various areas and regions of our country and their historical background. If I were a marketing man, on behalf of the Congress I would only say to the people that you go on trying some well-advertised new medicines and you feel no better, why not try some old prescriptions?

I hope my telegram received you in good time and that you and Karuna<sup>2</sup> were able to see Miku<sup>3</sup>. I am saying this because I know that both of you mean much to her.[....]

When you write to me next, please enclose with it a fool-proof recipe for making *Sarse maach*.

I had your very thoughtful response to Sardesai read out to me. But the reader told me that there were printing errors.

You have enquired about the theme on which you might try and persuade Bhabatosh Dutta<sup>4</sup> to write. I do not know if you would recall that we had carried a thoughtful piece by him on "Political Economy of Social Decadence". When I last wrote to him I had requested him if he would give us his precious thought on "Political Economy of India's

<sup>1</sup>Courtesy: Subrata Banerjee.

<sup>2</sup>Karuna Banerjee, a renowned Bangla film artist, who worked under Satyajit Ray.

<sup>3</sup>Anamika Haksar, Theatre Director, younger daughter of P N Haksar.

<sup>4</sup>Eminent Economist.



Renaissance". He could also perhaps consider analyzing the logic of what we are doing today in the name of "macro economic management" and how it will, in course of time, bring about health, wealth and happiness to 1000 million human beings who are citizens of the Republic of India. If we are going by the hopes aroused by GATT, what is the logic of NAFTA, ECC, Asia Pacific Region etc., etc.?

There is another theme on which he alone can do justice, namely, an alternative vision of society, of lifestyles, which will enable everybody to have nourishing food, good health, education and culture and, at the same time, cope with the problems posed by environmentalists.

Anyhow, any think-piece by Bhabatosh Babu would be most welcome.

With lots and lots of love to you and Karuna,

Yours affectionately,

P N Haksar

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22 March 1994

My dear Subrata:

Your letter of 16 March brought me relief. This business of writing "editorial" is really getting me down. I took recourse to an easier path in extensively quoting Havel. But I had a sinister purpose in doing what I did. The editorial was meant for the elite group of our society and was meant to sensitize them to moral and ethical compulsions.

I may be wrong, but I also feel that we who set out to "change the world" took too deterministic a view of "moral" circumstances. Millions of ordinary human beings who brought about revolution in France unfurled the flag bearing words like Liberty, Equality and Fraternity and those millions who made the Russian revolution of which the dominant sections were soldiers and sailors responded to peace. In fact, if the allied powers had allowed Kerensky to make separate peace with Germany, the February Revolution would not have got converted into the October Revolution.

Be that as it may, why do not you or Karuna or both jointly respond to the editorial by writing a critique of what Havel said and my attempt to emphasize once again human response to love, compassion, justice,

equity, etc., and not merely to "mode of production", and "relations of production"? Alienation from a given social order takes place in the hearts and minds of people. Millions upon millions of the poor and wretched of India responded to Gandhi and not to us who subjectively felt that we had a better vision of society and an ideology freed from mumbo jumbo morals and ethics.

I of course do not take seriously several words which have gone into our daily journalism such as "globalization", "competitiveness", "market", etc. I am also unconvinced about "technological determinism" of human destiny.

Do forgive all this ramblings on my part.

With lots and lots of love to you both,

Yours affectionately,

P N Haksar

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30 June 1994

My dear Subrata:

I once sent a letter by courier service to ISI in Calcutta. It was delivered after 14 days. Being tension prone, I was naturally very anxious about the fate of my two letters to you. I am so relieved that they have reached your hands. I am also glad to know that my reflections of 10 May 1994 met with your approval. That means much to me. I hope it also has the approval of Karuna.[....]

I presume that you would be coming to Delhi as you had planned on 21 July so that we could go through the various articles for the next issue of *Man & Development*. I am wondering whether you have badgered Bhabatosh Babu and Sushil Mukherjee<sup>1</sup> for their articles. Frankly, I would very much like Bhabatosh Babu, who is guilty of training so many economists in the country, to reflect on the science of economics. The sense of dissatisfaction which I always had with economics has now become a state of constant obsession with me. I am wondering what is the meaning of trillions worth of financial transactions which take place every day resulting in decline in the value of the Dollar King despite the interventions of appropriate financial institutions like federal reserve in the money markets of the world. Can

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<sup>1</sup>Eminent Scientist.

politicians control effectively those who are operating the money markets? And, above all, what does it all mean for health, wealth and happiness of human beings? I do very much want Bhabatosh Babu to reflect on all these matters which he alone is capable of reflecting in our country. Long long time ago, you may recall, he wrote an article which was published in *Man & Development* on the theme of "Political Economy of Social Decadence". Ever since then, I have been wanting him to write on the theme of "Political Economy of Social Renaissance".

I wonder if you have any kind hearted soul in Calcutta who would, once in a while, give some advertising support to *Man & Development*.

I am all alone these days. Nandi<sup>1</sup> is away in Maniapur. Anamika is away in Bangalore.

With lots and lots of love to you and Karuna,

Yours affectionately,  
P N Haksar

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14 September 1995

Dearest Subrata:

I was deeply, deeply moved by what you wrote in your letter of 8 September which, by an act of miracle, reached me in two days. I feel so relieved to learn that you think it worthwhile to publish the correspondence I have had with Professor U R Rao. I was worried that lest some might think that I am engaging myself in "self advertisement". The poem you have quoted by Rabindranath Tagore I vividly recall. I should live to have the full text of it and anything which he might have written in elaboration of his theme. I am also looking now for several years for something which Tagore wrote in one of his works. I cannot recall the exact words, but he was talking about the sources of his own inspiration and he said that they all lie within India and that his attachment to the country is not because of any "idolatry".

Since you and Karuna are going to USA and I do know that both of you do need some rest and relaxation, I am a bit troubled that you are

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<sup>1</sup>Nandita Haksar, Eminent Lawyer in Defence of Human Rights in India, elder daughter of Shri P N Haksar.

thinking of hastening back because of *Man & Development*. It therefore occurred to me that if you have got any scripts lying with you which you think are worth publishing in the December issue of *Man & Development*. I would suggest that you send them on to me under registered post. Those scripts, together with some articles I have with me would make the December issue. I can put them together with the help of Unni<sup>1</sup> and Anamika and hand them over to Gupta<sup>2</sup>. Perhaps Sumanta<sup>3</sup> could do the proof reading. If this is acceptable to you, you can then spend some more time with your children and see a bit of the great land of "manifest destiny". My friend, Indira Prarthasarathy, went to USA to stay with his son. On his return he said that when you are there, he felt as if he was living in a "golden cage". I hope you and Karuna do not have the same feeling.

While going to Seoul was a sort of change for me, but I found the air travel very very tiring. Extraordinarily large number of Nobel Prize winners and others were collected at the conference for the purpose of taking a "global initiative" for ensuring that in the twenty first century "ethics, morality and humanism" have a sway over "material things". I must confess that I was a bit surprised that a country which is widely advertised as the first Asian Tiger should be turning into a vegetarian! The conference was also very tiring because there were not only the conference and committees, but also lunches and dinners. However, since my return on the 9th at 5:00 a.m., I have been taking rest. Part of that rest I owe to S P Godrej & Company because their typewriter has gone out of order and Unni is having a hard time to get it repaired. This letter is therefore being typed on a typewriter which is of archeological interest.

With lots of love to you and Karuna,

Yours affectionately,

P N Haksar

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<sup>1</sup>P K Unnikrishnan, Secretary to Shri P N Haksar and Secretary in Indian Statistical Institute, Delhi.

<sup>2</sup>Anand Gupta, owner of Diggigraphics Printing Press, Delhi.

<sup>3</sup>Sumanta Banerjee, Journalist.



13 September 1996

My dear Subrata:

I have your letter of 9 September. I had hoped to meet you and Karuna in Calcutta. In fact, I had booked my air ticket leaving Delhi on Sunday 8 September. I had to cancel it because I found myself in a weak state of health. However, what actually prevented me from going was my doctor's advice that I should not undertake the travel when my head goes awry under the impact of long neglected spondylitis. Actually I fell down one day while trying to get up from my bed. I am therefore eagerly looking forward to meeting you when you come here on or after 21<sup>st</sup> of October. I have no commitments in that month, especially towards its last week.

Your ultimatum about the editorial has un-nerved me. And, as of today, I just do not know what to write about. May be the journal can go without my editorial.

I agree with your suggestion that Surjit Mansingh's<sup>1</sup> article might be placed after B N Ghosh's<sup>2</sup> article. [...]

I am also in a state of deep depression when I contemplate Boudhayan's<sup>3</sup> condition. His financial situation is really desperate and I do not know what I should really do.

The only aspect of my life which makes me cheerful at present is the fact that Nandita, her husband and Anamika are all here. It keeps me occupied with my duties as a housewife.

With lots of love to you both,

Yours affectionately,  
P N Haksar

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19 September 1996

My dear Subrata:

Considering the state of both my body and mind, I thought that I could not really write anything worthwhile by way of an editorial. I was at

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<sup>1</sup>Professor, J N U, New Delhi.

<sup>2</sup>Professor of Economics, School of Social Sciences, University of Science, Penang, Malaysia.

<sup>3</sup>Boudhayan Chattopadhyaya, Eminent Economist.

the point of writing to you and saying that let the next issue go without an editorial. However, when I heard over the radio the great news that the entire police force in America have publicly declared their support to Clinton's candidature for presidency because he has deeper commitment to eradicate crime in America, I felt a bit stimulated and wrote the piece which I am enclosing. You are at liberty to withhold its publication if you feel that I have not articulated myself adequately. I have quoted from my Korean friend because we are now invited to admire the Asian Tigers.

I trust that you and Karuna are in the best of spirits.

With lots of love,

Yours affectionately,  
P N Haksar

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9 March 1998

My dear Subrata:

I have your letters of 21 February and 4 March 1998. While I share with you your sense of depression about the political configurations in our country, we must not forget that we also provided ideological distinction to labelling the Hindus and Muslims as two nations. We also had a peculiar attitude towards the National Movement which was supposed to have been led by bourgeois elements in our society since the "working class" could alone carry out a true anti-imperialist revolution in India. Anyhow, history shows examples after examples of being cruel to frozen mindsets.

Enough of this nonsense; for I must now come to the real problems of life, viz., your plan to travel to Delhi.

All the dates you have suggested in your letter of 4 March are alright. That means you would be arriving here on 23 April and return back to Calcutta on 25 April. Are you coming alone or with Karuna? If you are coming alone, you can stay with me in the guest room upstairs.

I have not written an editorial for a long time as I really do not know on what theme to write about. Have you any ideas both for the current issue now in the press and the next issue?

With lots and lots of love to you and Karuna,

Yours affectionately,

My dear Subrata:

I have your letter of 25 May together with Boudhayan's bio-data in which the date of his death is not mentioned. When you write to me next, please do let me know. I am still undecided as to what I should do with his manuscript. One or two publishers whom I happen to know have not evinced any interest in telling the story of Bengal famine. It looks as if someone of "eminence" should write a Foreword.

Be that as it may, your letter caused me anxieties. The suffering of Nikhil<sup>1</sup> is quite unbearable. He is still lying in hospital. He does not seem to recognize anyone or speak anything. My own younger brother who is 14 years junior to me is lying dangerously ill. So far as I am concerned, I go about the business of living but my doctors have put me in a state of mental distress. I committed the mistake of going through various check-ups. There is some indication of malignancy in my right kidney. For the time being, however, I have entrusted myself to a vaidya in Dehradun who is known to our President. He claims that he has Ayurvedic treatment for cancer. I am therefore swallowing his medicines. He says that he will subject me to some test after a month. Let us see what happens.

To be quite frank, I have long been in favour of India becoming a nuclear power. In the real world of politics, even in the countries which claim to follow Jesus or Buddha, moral arguments do not carry weight. Possessing nuclear weapons and then passionately advocating nuclear disarmament might carry some little weight. However, we have handled China rather badly. Our Defence Minister needles China unnecessarily. I am troubled about this.

Our President made a very good and interesting speech in New York when he was given the Award of World Statesmanship. I have sent it to Gupta with a little editorial note of mine as a sort of lead article. It is really a quite thoughtful speech.

With lots and lots of love to you and Karuna. I do really miss you both,

Yours affectionately,

P N Haksar

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<sup>1</sup>Nikhil Chakravartty, former Editor *Mainstream*.

23 June 1998

My dear Subrata:

I have your letter. I am sorry that I should be a source of worry to you. If you had carefully read Vol. I of my autobiography, you will find that I had written the following sentence in it: "There are only two fixed points of human existence on this earth: the day we are born and the day we die". I am quoting this from my memory. Long long time ago I read the dialogue between Nachiketas and Yama. After reading that I became conscious that there is no such a thing as immortality. We comfort ourselves by saying that there is a soul. Personally I do not even believe in it. To me the word 'soul' merely means human spirit which expresses itself in a variety of ways and forms both noble and ignoble. So, dear Subrata do not worry. Of course it is sad to see the state in which Nikhil is performing the last journey in his life. I get almost daily report on him from Sumit<sup>1</sup> or Gargi<sup>2</sup> or even Shantimoy<sup>3</sup> who is here. My own brother who is 14 years younger to me is seriously ill. However, I cannot indulge in the luxury of self pity.

I am looking forward to your visit to Delhi. The dates you have suggested should be all right. You have asked me whether I am going to write any editorial for the June issue. The answer is no. Are you bursting with any new ideas? If you are, you can compose that editorial.

By the way, ISI is having its Convocation on 29th of June sometime in the afternoon. If I find myself in a fit enough condition I am planning to leave Delhi for Calcutta on 28 June by the early morning flight. Please do telephone me at ISI Guest House so that we could, if possible, arrange to meet sometime somewhere.

With lots and lots of love to you and dear Karuna,

P N Haksar

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<sup>1</sup>Sumit Chakravartty, Editor Mainstream.

<sup>2</sup>Professor of History, wife of Sumit Chakravartty.

<sup>3</sup>Shantimoy Roy, Eminent Political & Social Activist.



## 9. To Professor U R Rao

*The editing of this journal inevitably involves raising of questions as well as going through the agony of finding answers. Inevitably, the editor has to share this agony with a number of our distinguished natural and social scientists as well as others working in the field of international relations. In recent months, we have corresponded with a very distinguished scientist, Professor U R Rao who has been the Chairman of India's Space Commission and is, currently, President of the forthcoming Indian National Science Congress. We felt that it might be interesting to publish the entire correspondence in order to stimulate the readers of this journal to participate in the process of raising questions as well as seeking their answers. These letters are published in lieu of the Editorial.<sup>1</sup>*

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21 March 1994

Dear Professor Rao

I am truly grateful to you for sending me your article on the broad theme of "Technology in the Developing World". I am deeply touched by your great labour of love. It will be a very great privilege for me to publish your thought provoking article.

As I survey the mindsets of those who wield power around the world, I see little evidence of awareness of the logic of what has been done in the past in the name of "progress". I may be wrong, but I have a gut feeling that one needs a new design for living if we are to save our planet Earth as well as the human beings living on it. Human beings must have nutritious food, clean water to drink and clean air to breathe. When they have this, their body and their brain become active and creative. Assuming that we are able to provide the essential health services, the human mind has to be fed with education and culture. And by 'culture', I mean, not merely sensitiveness to art, music and literature, but the abiding values articulated by Buddha, Jesus, Mohammad, Einstein, Gandhi, etc., etc. All technological decisions are now being made in the

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<sup>1</sup>Man & Development: September 1995.

name of competitiveness. And, "competition" has implicit in it economic conflicts and trade wars. In my humble opinion, the survival of the global village depends more on co-operation rather than competition. Because the problems are so difficult and complex, very large numbers of human beings, even in so-called affluent societies, are massively alienated and they find solace and comfort either in drugs or in some fundamentalist creed, which is the very antithesis of scientific temper and scientific method. There is also the phenomenon of massive unemployment in Europe, USA and now even in Japan. We are, therefore, reduced to being ritualistic by observing a "day of women and children", a "day of the disabled", a "day of environment", and so on.

I am sorry to inflict this letter on you, but your thoughtful article has provoked me to share my concerns with you.

With warmest regards and best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

P N Haksar

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23 February 1995

Dear Shri Haksar,

I profusely apologize for taking such a long time to reply to your letter, partly due to my other commitments, but largely due to lack of clarity in my own mind to provide even self-consistent answers to the profound questions you have raised in your letter. I once again went back to read a number of articles and books written by past thinkers, in particular *Daedulus* by Professor Haldane and Bertrand Russell's book, hoping that I could gain some understanding before replying to you. To my sadness, I am afraid that I have remained as ignorant as before, even after reading these articles.

Scientifically speaking, we have all maintained that the extra-genetic transmission of experience is primarily responsible for the growth of human intelligence, which has enabled the human species to vectorially build their knowledge, science and technology, on the experience communicated from their predecessors. This is in contrast to the purely genetic transmission in animals, which continue to follow the same technological path as their predecessors, millions of years ago, an oft-quoted example being that of termites building anthills. We may even grant that the extra-genetic transmission, which is behind the

development of human intelligence, is also responsible for providing the unique ability to critically weigh the benefits and consequences of their own action, connect cause and effect and rationally think. I believe the instinct of survival is what made human beings to develop community life purely as a defence mechanism against the pressure from natural surroundings, which finally led to the formation of clusters of agricultural societies in the past. A simplistic view would be that the origin of values like love, compassion, tolerance, humanism, etc., naturally got developed to establish harmonious and peaceful living within and amongst communities, to prevent total anarchy and annihilation of societies. Somehow, this answer is too simplistic and does not satisfy me. A cow or any other animal shows the same type of love and exhibits similar quantities of compassion and tolerance not only to its own offsprings but also to other animals with which it is in constant contact, except for the fact that such emotions are not probably as long-lived as in the case of human beings. Does this not mean that these qualities are basically biological or genetic in nature and the development of intelligence has only enabled a more rational application of these qualities.

In fact, of late, I have started wondering whether human beings have really these noble qualities or the exercise of such emotions are essentially restricted to their own small circle of self-interest. How would we otherwise explain the rampant corruption, selfishness, power hunger, violence and intolerance prevalent in our chaotic societies and between nations. The world of human beings has not shown any love or compassion for the millions dying out of naked starvation, or any tolerance to other's beliefs and faiths or the so-called humanism when one's own way of life is threatened. I have wondered why we have put humanism on the highest pedestal, when we are well aware that it is human beings who hoard, collect and build their little empires beyond their want, unlike animals which get fully satisfied once their daily bread is acquired. I am tending to agree with Bertrand Russell, that science is not a substitute for virtue and it has not made men and societies more sensible, given more self-control, more kindness or greater discrimination to discount their own passions. Notwithstanding the hopes of thinkers like Dewey, it has not been found possible to fuse science and co-operative intelligence into even democratic politics. Knowledge, sadly has not been able to discipline public passions. The basic age-old conflict between values and interests have overpowered the restraining effects due to objective reasoning, ultimately making a mockery of the so-called human values, which we seem to proclaim from house-tops.

Finally, I do not believe that conversion of science into technology, however good it is, can ever be law-governed. While it is true that developments of weapons of mass destruction, for example, could have been avoided if there were such a provision universally accepted, the fact that there is a thin line between technological development for peaceful and non-peaceful applications, makes it impossible to channelize the activities in one direction. The seed of nuclear device is hidden in the discovery of peaceful chain reaction. It does not need great intelligence to convert rockets used for launching peaceful communication, meteorological or remote sensing satellites into missiles of massive destruction. Laser power, which is used for a variety of peaceful applications, can easily be adopted for destructive purposes. I have a feeling that we will be living in an idealistic and impractical Utopia, if we were to think that we would succeed in governing technology development through legal process. We can only hope for the overriding influence of the noble qualities you mentioned in your letter to awaken individual societies and nations to enable them to progress towards a peaceful and harmonious way of living. In a world which is essentially dictated by chaos, I have come to the conclusion that societies and nations will go on making minor corrections whenever a problem threatens to mushroom into a disaster and thus keep civilization moving forward, even though in random steps, without, however, having either the courage or will to address the fundamental issues.

I am fully conscious of the fact that instead of providing meaningful answers, I have only succeeded in further confusing the issues. If so, please do forgive me, since my writing can only reflect the level of my own ignorance.

With regards,

Yours sincerely

U R Rao

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19 April 1995

My dear Professor Rao

You cannot imagine what a joy it was for me to meet you the other day in Delhi when we gathered together on the occasion of the distribution of Bhasin Awards. It was a matter of great honour for me that I should be called upon to present to you one of the awards. I felt deep within myself a sense of total inadequacy.



Be that as it may, I am writing to you in response to your extraordinarily thoughtful letter of 23 February 1995.

Sitting all by myself in my own loneliness, I ask myself a question: Supposing there were no human beings living on this earth, would then there be anyone asking questions? Would there be anyone to build institutions like family, clan and tribe or even nations? It is we who ask questions; it is we who search for answers; it is we who fight for justice; it is we who understand the intimations of love. How else can one explain the phenomenon of messages of the saints and sages of the Vedic and Upanishadic period spreading far and wide — the message of Buddha evoking such stimulant responses from very large numbers of human beings living in India, China, Vietnam and Japan. How else can we explain the response to the messages of Jesus? We may not be able to live up to it, but the most sensitive amongst us must realize the contradictions between our acceptance of the message and our own selfishness, greed, hatred, violence, etc. So, without raising human beings to the level of gods, there is something specific about *Homo sapiens*. And the question is whether it is entirely genetic and deterministic or whether it is a product of constant thinking, constructing hypotheses, testing them out and seeing where the balance of advantage lies and then continuing it, generation after generation through poetry, music, dance, drama, etc. This is where the word culture and the word civilization enter. In my younger days, when I totally accepted the legitimacy of British rule over India, I began questioning it under the influence of persons like Gandhi whom I heard in Allahabad, of Nehru, of Azad, of Tagore, of Subrahmaniam Bharati, of Iqbal, so on and so forth. What is this process? The animal world, without any disrespect to them, does not respond to *sahitya*, *sangeet* and *kala*, nor do they understand the meaning and significance of words like *Tapa*, *Daan*, *Guna*, *Sheela*, *Dharma*, etc., etc. Since science itself has moved out of the realm of determinism and rigorous of deductive logic, can't we say as human beings that we can be makers of our own destiny and that war, torture, suffering, hunger, etc., are not inevitable? Why do we waste so much time in contemplating the fate of the hungry, the poor, the terrible things we do to women who are our mothers, etc., etc.?

I devoutly hope and pray that my letter in response to your very thought provoking letter is not altogether fit for a waste-paper basket. Since I have, for some mysterious reasons, a tremendous sense of faith in your integrity of thought and action, I am writing this letter to you to seek light and guidance. Finally, humanism is a recognition of the fact that we alone, as a species, are capable of transcending our primordial

identities into something larger. There is no such transcendence in the animal world.

I apologize for inflicting this letter on you.

With affectionate regards,

Yours affectionately,

P N Haksar

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15 May 1995

Dear Shri Haksar,

I cannot adequately express my joy at receiving your letter, which for some intuitive reason, I was eagerly expecting. The questions you raise are so challenging and fundamental that my reaction can at best reflect my loud thinking on the issues you have raised and can by no means be even remotely construed as answers.

Indeed, without the presence of human beings on this planet, there would be none to ask questions, seek answers, build institutions and also sadly destroy them. If saints and sages rose above the level of human beings, the best we can claim is that we acquired the wisdom of reacting to them and pass on their messages of love, compassion, generosity and care to others. Yet the tragedy is that as individuals, societies and even as nations, we have not been able to practise them. In spite of our being conscious that we are only a passing interlude in the process of evolution, we have allowed our greed, selfishness, hatred and violence to rule our intellectual thinking and practical actions. While, as thinking human beings we have acquired special powers to become the fittest and survive, our arrogance and aggressive attitude to use this power to eliminate or even wipe out other species of creation is most terrifying. I wonder whether nature intentionally conspired to promote contradictions between our innermost thoughts and actions to ensure that human beings will never reach the level of gods.

The development of human intelligence is unquestionably a product of extra-genetic characteristics involving accumulation, analysis, questioning, deduction and verification of data and knowledge. Most of us believe that the genesis of conceptual thinking and verbal language are the two extra-genetic factors which have profoundly influenced human culture and civilization, even though we may continue to question which amongst the two originated first. Small and great discoveries

emerge when we are confronted with multiple independent lines of thought or pieces of evidence, which, when brought into conjunction, suddenly seem to stimulate a new way of thinking, resulting in significant cognitive accomplishments. The phenomenal development of the human mind, unlike those of even higher animals, is undoubtedly due to the evolution of cognitive thinking and syntactic speech which have enabled successive generations to acquire traditional knowledge through transmitted heritability, as well as selective acquisition, and vectorially build upon them. Since the emergence of human culture it is only the human soul which seems to have remained unchanged.

While the exact turning point in the history of human civilization when conceptual thinking and verbal language became a part of our life is a mystery, it is clear that abandonment of nomadic life in favour of community living and settled agriculture, as an act of self-preservation in the competitive natural atmosphere, institutionalized private ownership. The two major consequences of this single act of human evolution were territorial aggression for the protection of sovereignty and the explosive growth of human population. Both of these consequential traits were probably the greatest contributors responsible for the origin of class-conscious human society and the increasing desire for personal ownership from small landlordships to large kingdoms. Acceleration of cultural development, as knowledge generates more knowledge, results in rapid accumulation of collective knowledge surpassing the capacity of single brains. Since each individual is able to master only a small part of the knowledge base, division of knowledge among individual human beings, leading to division of labour, becomes the natural organic process of development, which soon transforms human beings into a class-conscious society.

I feel that the single act of human evolution, namely, the institutionalization of private ownership is the genesis of undesirable characteristics of human behaviour, such as cruelty, lust, avariciousness, greed, hate, aggressiveness and selfishness. While one would have intuitively expected that commonly shared knowledge, skills and aspirations would have led to greater cultural unity, man's baser qualities, in reality, have led to the presently dangerous trend of depersonalization of inter-human relationships.

I have searched my own mind to find a suitable word to describe desirable selfishness as against detrimental selfishness. I believe that without desirable selfishness we can have no motivation or progress. All of us would agree that life-time efforts of ancient *rishis* and modern reformers, the single-minded devotion of scientists to discover new



phenomena, attempts to achieve perfection through literature or art, controlled aggression to protect one's own family of kith and kin and even hoarding of grains or accumulation of wealth to meet the basic necessities of life to hedge against unanticipated disasters, are selfish acts driven by intensive motivation to achieve name, fame, personal satisfaction or protection of self and family, even though these are essential for promoting civilization. Even accumulation of wealth by individual entrepreneurship activities is a desirable trait as it generates employment potential, creates wealth by cashing knowledge, and results in improved quality of life for all. It is only when these qualities are exploited at the cost of other's misery and suffering, and accumulation of wealth or exercise of power are used to subjugate and harass the weaker sections, that the society is driven towards ruination and humaneness disappears. At a larger level of aggregation, even nations behave the same way as individuals, purely driven by arrogance of power. Does this not mean that while genesis of values is a prerequisite for development, the logical consequence of development is not necessarily value formation?

We all recognize that human diversity like biodiversity is what makes this planet beautiful. The birth of different religions, languages, ethnic groups and life habits are purely accidental, influenced by our natural surroundings. Our own birth in a particular social set-up is not by our choice but is the result of a statistical accident. While we continue to proclaim the need to develop unity in diversity at societal, national and international levels, we have allowed ourselves to become victims of fundamentalism, intolerance and clanism, resulting in the total fragmentation of society. The question in my opinion is, can we reverse this arrow of destruction and build a truly humane civilization or do we meekly accept the second law of thermodynamics as *fait accompli*, that entropy or chaos is unidirectional and will go on increasing because it is the law of nature, and that our creative processes have sadly failed to find expression through our perceptions of value.

I believe that the great cultural heritage of art, music and literature, which the human civilization has developed over centuries, has its genesis in nature. If the magnificent panorama of colours in animals, insects, birds and butterflies are great works of art, the song of the nightingale or the cuckoo, the humming of the bees, the roar of lions or the fury of rivers, truly represent music. Man acquired these great qualities from nature and turned them into literature when he attempted to describe the beauty of nature and the melody of sounds as revealed to him. The greatest gift of humankind, that of speech developing into language, resulted in the powerful medium of expression for relating



human experience of nature in the form of literature. Goethe considered this experience as revelation of nature, others attributed it to intuition. I believe that the combination of the two is what enabled human beings to synthesize their perceptions to produce great works of art, music or literature. Even science is surely born out of attempts to synthesize nature's truth and derive large-scale benefits after understanding the processes involved in creation itself. Surely, the anthill built by termites is an extraordinarily great piece of architecture, just as the spider's web is a magnificent combination of chemical and structural engineering.

While recognition of basic colours, sound and music is surely widespread amongst animals and insects, synthesis of these to produce new forms of living art, culture, music and literature has been the prerogative of human beings, primarily because of their ability to master conceptual thinking and verbal language. It is these same qualities which have enabled us to develop deductive logic and understand the meaning and significance of words like *Tapa, Daan, Guna, Sheela and Dharma*. Paradoxically, it is these very qualities, under the influence of aggressive selfishness, that are causing misery, deprivation, cruelty and suffering creating an inequitable world. We can make our own destiny only when we are able to collectively use our supreme qualities for constructive purposes, which I believe is impractical to realize in practice, not because we are unable to distinguish between good and evil but because we are incapable of disciplining aggression and power hungry selfishness through the dictates of our own conscience. We may be alone, as a species, having the capability of transcending-our primordial identities into something nobler, but the chaos in our society, however creative it is, will not achieve this goal.

I do not know whether I have been cynical in my thinking, even though I personally think I am realistic in accepting the world as we have inherited. I believe that one bright spot in our turbulent history is that in spite of the random walk characteristic of chaos, humanity continues to and will steadily move forward, albeit slowly, because of the eventual suppression of evil by good. I am sure that my loud thinking has many gaps and holes, or even may be superficial. Of one thing I am certain, that your thoughtful questions will continue to haunt me, even though it may be totally beyond my capacity to find satisfactory answers.

With affectionate regards,

Respectfully yours,

U R Rao

20 June 1995

My dear Professor Rao

Some time in the sixth decade of the eighteenth century, the city of Lisbon was struck by an earthquake of severe intensity. As things were falling apart, a man was seen going around selling "Anti-earthquake Pills". Some sceptic stopped him and asked him whether the pills will provide the relief. The seller of the pills replied: "No, But, what is the alternative?" My writing to you is motivated by my search for "alternatives".

Sitting here in Delhi, mostly by myself, I contemplate the fate of our planet Earth and the Homo sapiens who inhabit it. Despite the tremendous exponential growth of science which is a product of human curiosity, and its accumulation over centuries, I cannot help feeling that something has gone wrong somewhere in ensuring health, wealth and happiness of humankind as well as safeguarding our habitat.

As I contemplate the panorama of human history on this earth, I find that despite the messages of the great Messiahs, the successive wielders of power and intelligence, who are co-opted by them in the exercise of the power and the privilege, have created a mindset for themselves which becomes opaque with the impact of the logic of power and retaining that power and privileges. And, if there is such a thing as history, would it be wrong to say that history is a process of interaction between the power structure and power elite and the word called "people"? This interaction is naturally mediated through a great variety of institutions built up in the course of time. And, when the mass of people begin to feel that those who exercise power and the institutions on which that power rests — be it a kingdom or a modern state — have ceased to interact then the cumulative consciousness of "people" begin to question the moral legitimacy of that system and the structure of power. The events which have taken place in the twentieth century tend to confirm the correctness of my hypothesis on the basis of which I explain to myself the phenomena of history.

I choose a date in the first decade of this century, namely, the date of the funeral of Emperor Edward VII, which took place around the 10th of May 1910. The funeral was attended by about 79 or 80 Heads of States and Governments from all over the world and that as many as 40 of them were Kings and Emperors. Neither these eminent wielders of power nor their advisers were conscious of the impending changes. The

tremendous mindset was about the inevitability of progress and, as since 1814 Europe had not experienced war, there was widespread conviction that there would be no war. And yet, we had two world wars and we had the total disintegration of the Manchu Empire in 1911, the Ottoman Turkish, Rumanov and Hapsbourg Empires in 1917 and, finally, the disintegration of British, French, Dutch and Portugese Empires at the end of World War II. (I am writing all this from my memory as blindness prevents me from checking up the details.) Finally, we had the utter destruction of the USSR. It was meant to be a new experiment of scientific socialism as distinct from Utopian socialism.

If one views these power systems, then one does observe the operation of entropy. But, at the same time, each chaos is succeeded by some measure of order which, in its turn, poses a challenge to all of us to learn from history. But to learn from history, we need to have a mindset which is not opaque.

My inflicting all these letters written in tortured prose are merely attempts to open up such mind as I possess to our contemporary realities.

If I am trying out your patience, I seek your forgiveness. However, an idea occurs to me that if you permit me, I could publish in the quarterly journal, *Man & Development*, the texts of the correspondence we have had with a view to stimulating further debate among its readers. If you have any objection to my disclosing your name, I will be happy to publish your letters as from a distinguished and sensitive Indian scientist. I shall anxiously await your response as a sort of life-supporting system for me.

With my affectionate regards,

Yours affectionately,

P N Haksar

P. S.: The delay in writing to you was entirely due to the fact that between May 1 and until the 1st week of June, I was in a poor state of health. I had to spend some time in a clinic and then in a hospital. One day in my room as I stood up to receive a telephone call, I fell down and fainted and in the process my head struck against a table and I was unconscious for some time. However, it is all over now and I am able to cope with the problem of life and living. Therefore, do not worry.

11 July 1995

Dear Shri Haksar,

Thank you very much for your thought provoking letter of 20th June.

Throughout history, human ignorance has been exploited for personal benefit — whether commercial profit as in the sale of anti-earthquake pills, or much worse, intellectual exploitation and subjugation through promotion of myths, falsehoods and inequitable laws. Our society, which rightly abhors the exploitation of the physically handicapped has rarely recognized or condemned the intensity of exploitation of human ignorance and illiteracy. Indiscriminate plundering of nature justified, based on the mythical GAIA hypothesis of infinite self-regulating capability of mother earth to every abuse, has already led to the global disease of environmental tragedy. The search for alternatives you talk of, on which the fate of our planet Earth and Homo sapiens who inhabit it depends, has no doubt a much deeper connotation, well beyond the few bucks of profit from the selling of anti-earthquake pills. I believe that the secret is hidden in the beautiful statement of Mahatma Gandhi, "Nature can provide for everybody's needs but not for everybody's greed."

The oft-repeated statement that, "if the governments, societies and individuals can think globally and act locally", the planet Earth will be a better living place for all, may indeed be true, but is extremely difficult to realize in practice. The successive wielders of power, as you have rightly pointed out, at the individual or even collective level, have invariably exercised power not as sacred trustees but as arrogant dictatorial landlords. Even the elite, once they attain power, want only to perpetuate their power culture and acquire wealth and influence, if need be, through corruption, violence, greed and other unethical means. The best example is the continued exploitation of ethnic as well as religious differences and growth of fundamentalism, often aided by the so-called intellectuals and governments themselves, in spite of the basic recognition that it is essential for planetary consciousness to accommodate cultural diversity.

Am I cynical in proposing that arrogance and selfishness are the natural allies of every power structure leading to its utter corruption? I do not think so. I believe this is the logical consequence of the human desire to protect its power structure at any cost, which makes it intolerant of any opposition. I am not sure that history is truly a process of interaction



between the power structure and power elite and the people. I am convinced that history is really the mono-act play by power brokers and the so-called elites, in which the common people, who form the silent spectators, are helplessly swept away. This is because common men are so little accustomed to trust their own judgment that they take refuge in authority and tradition. Kings and kingdoms of the previous era have been merely replaced by power-hungry, corrupt politicians, who are even more dangerous, as they have legitimized their illegal activities through the distorted process of election.

I am afraid my sense of history is far too inadequate to enable me to make authoritative pronouncements or even draw authentic general conclusions. Still, I submit that the noble idea of Utopian socialism can never be realized in practice, simply because it is unrealistic to expect human beings to denounce greed, arrogance, selfishness and intolerance once they have tasted the fruits of power. It is probably in the law of human nature that the strong want to be stronger, the rich want to be richer, the arrogant wish to subjugate the meek and the powerful destroy the opposition, to preserve the supremacy of their own power structure.

It is only when conditions deteriorate to such an extent that life itself becomes impossible and the common man is driven well beyond his threshold limit of tolerance, that we begin to witness the collective questioning of the legitimacy of the system, as in the case of the French and the Soviet revolutions. In the ultimate analysis, it is time which becomes the final arbiter. When conditions deteriorate to such an extent that total degeneracy sets in, history steps in to recreate the level field, only to start the entire process once again! This cycle seems to me to continue unabated, without human beings ever becoming wiser from the lessons of the past, the memory of which seems to get erased the moment the new cycle begins. Very soon, the initial euphoria generated by the idealism of the new revolution is replaced by stark reality and new power brokers rise from the ashes, who in turn start practising the same vice which they fought against.

It looks to me that the disintegration of empires, whether Manchu, Ottoman, Turkish or Hapsbourg of the past or those of the British, French, Dutch, German and Soviet empires during this century, teaches us one important lesson — that of the impossibility of continued exploitation and subjugation of a set of people, however ignorant, poor and backward they are. Unfortunately, the lessons from history have never succeeded in making power structures wiser. Each cycle of change starting with power grabbing, rampant corruption, expansion of

the power base, annihilation of opposition, perpetuation of the power centre, finally results in orchestrated public outcry and the destruction of the very power centres, to be succeeded by a new cycle all over again.

I firmly believe that there is a cycle of changes in the history of nations or people. To quote Spengler and Toynbee, "the human history is characterized not as endless progress from a primitive society to advanced civilization but instead as an endless cycle of birth, growth, decay and death of civilization". Unlike the technological revolutions which are unidirectional, unpredictable and irreversible, political revolutions generally are predictable, most often being merely the revival of ancient regimes. Being guided by man's social conscience and his sense of justice, political revolutions seem to end up in trying an apparently different solution each time, which in reality was the one discarded earlier. A good example of this phenomenon is the habit of people constantly changing the party in power, from the current corrupt to the one discarded earlier because of corruption, in the vain hope that the latter has learnt its lesson through defeat and introspection during the cooling period. I believe that the virtual domination of chaos over order is an intrinsic part of the human make-up, which progresses only in a random-walk fashion, because of its total inability to discard, what you have termed, as its opaque mindset to history.

I hope this rather long and laborious reply to your letter makes some sense. I have absolutely no objection to your publishing the texts of our correspondence in *Man & Development* and to disclosing my name. I only hope that even if my replies are vague and unsatisfactory, our correspondence and, in particular, your searching questions will stimulate further thinking by some of the readers, among whom, we may find better minds capable of providing more satisfactory answers.

With my warm personal regards,

Yours sincerely,  
U R Rao

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